



# THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

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it deals—it is often dogmatic in order to be clear or brief—and no attempt to put into the hands of the teacher a detailed programme or set of lessons for his daily guidance. In the first place I am not qualified to undertake this task, and in the second I should not undertake it for the teacher if I were—when the book replaces the teacher, it is time for the teacher to depart.

Lastly I have unfortunately no special knowledge of phonetics—whether this disqualifies me for the task I have undertaken I leave it to my readers to decide.

*January, 1923.*

H. WYATT.





## CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	PREFACE ... ..	iii
I.	THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA ...	1
II.	SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD .	11
III.	THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE ...	20
IV.	THE DIRECT METHOD ... ..	36
V.	PROCEDURE IN THE EARLY STAGE ...	43
VI.	THE MIDDLE STAGE AND THE READER ...	54
VII.	THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR ... ..	79
VIII.	THE CURSORY READER ... ..	87
IX.	THE VERNACULAR IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH (INCLUDING TRANSLATION) ...	96
X.	THE HIGH STAGE ... ..	107
XI.	THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE ... ..	124
XII.	SPELLING AND HANDWRITING ... ..	136
XIII.	ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ...	140
XIV.	EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH ... ..	144
XV.	THE PREPARATION OF THE TEACHER ...	157

## APPENDIX

I.	STAMMERING ... ..	162
II.	SUGGESTIONS ... ..	164



# CHAPTER I

## THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

THE problem of procedure in teaching English to Indian school pupils is beset by special difficulties and conditions that have yet to be squarely faced. The methods at present in fashion in our schools are ineffectual largely through an ignorance, or at least an ignoring, of these special circumstances.

### *Books on the Method of Teaching*

Now the books from which earnest teachers are apt to look for guidance are of three different types—

(1) Books on the teaching of English written for English pupils in England.

(2) Books on the teaching of modern foreign languages (usually French or German) to English pupils in England.

(3) Books on the teaching of English to Indian pupils in India.

Books of each of these types may be usefully consulted, provided the special circumstances of the Indian school pupil have been first considered, but if, as too often happens, they are not, amongst other bad consequences of using books of the first type for guidance may be mentioned in particular the adoption by the teacher teaching English of methods better adapted to teaching a vernacular; there is a general confusion in method and emphasis between the two. The use of books of the second type misleads the teacher as to the aims he should keep in view, and consequently distorts his methods. While it must regretfully be admitted that books of the third type at present on the market, written perhaps by writers too busy to give whole-time attention to the particular problems of English teaching, as a rule either prescribe too rigid a procedure or accept too hastily a set of modern principles more or less accepted

## 2 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

by advanced language teachers in England. In particular they have tended to misinterpret or to overrate the Direct Method, a topic to be considered in detail in Chapter IV below.

First of all, then, we should clear the ground by bringing into prominence the special character of the problem. In what follows I have the Punjab in my mind's eye, but this does not mean that the points I raise do not apply in great part to other provinces of India.

### *English a Modern Foreign Language*

In the first place, (1) English in India is a Modern Foreign language, differing more from any vernacular familiar to the pupil than English differs from French or German. That English is a foreign language to the pupil is the least special of the five circumstances, but it is a circumstance which in the standards expected of the pupil, in the distribution of emphasis upon the different attainments that are associated with language study, in the selection of books for study and in the methods adopted in teaching, is repeatedly overlooked, more perhaps at the University than at the school stage of education. This fact of the foreign character of English we must as teachers keep consciously and steadily in view. Its significance for school teachers will be unfolded later on.

### *Taught with Special Aims*

This brings me to the second circumstance of importance. Allowing English to be a modern foreign language,

(2) it yet has to be taught in India with an aim rather different from that with which, say, French or German is taught in secondary schools in England. The ordinary English pupil learning French at school will still continue to use his native tongue as his ordinary means of communication. At the University stage, for example, he will listen to lectures given in his mother tongue; if he have an office appointment, he will not ordinarily conduct his correspondence in French or German; and members of the educated or official sections

of society with whom he converses will speak to him in the same language as he uses in his daily life at home. Besides this, his newspaper reading and all that is essential to him in his studies will be available to him in his vernacular. In India the case is otherwise, and the linguistic needs of the pupil are correspondingly altered. English, the foreign language, he has to make a practical medium of educated and even of colloquial educated life. Our aims in teaching English must be adapted accordingly.

(3) Thirdly, English is used as a medium of instruction even in the school stage itself. This still further affects the distribution of emphasis to be placed on the different branches of the study in the stages preliminary to that at which it becomes a medium.

#### *Place of the Vernacular*

(4) The fourth significant circumstance is the place accorded in schools to the vernacular. The difficulty the teacher of *English* has to face is that *the vernacular* is so often inadequately and inefficiently taught, by comparatively lowly qualified and low-paid teachers. This not only limits the extent to which the teacher of English can avail himself of linguistic attainments in the vernacular, but throws upon him much of the teaching of the language arts which should normally be undertaken in the mother tongue.

#### *The Teacher of English*

(5) Lastly, the teacher of English himself is often an indifferent English linguist, a drawback which is especially damaging when the least qualified teachers and those least adept in English are made responsible for the pupil's early years of English study. This circumstance can be partly remedied by assigning the worse linguists to the middle stage in the teaching of English, and, where the public are prepared to pay, by special courses in Common English for Anglo-Vernacular teachers; but in the meantime it cannot but restrict the scope and control the procedure to be recommended to Anglo-Vernacular teachers of junior classes.

## 4 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

So that while the attainments expected of the pupil, if he is to use English as a regular medium of speech and reading before he leaves the high school, are pitched severely high, the obstacles to his progress are greater and more discouraging than those which beset the English pupil learning French or the French pupil learning English.

But the circumstances which I have enumerated will by now have convinced the reader that the teaching of English in India constitutes a peculiar problem, which is not to be solved lightly by adopting procedures recommended in books on the Direct Method of teaching French to English pupils, or by using text-books written ostensibly for India which have not taken all these circumstances into consideration, still less by attempting the vain task of applying to the teaching of this foreign language in different circumstances, methods and ideas advocated and practised by specially good teachers of English to pupils who have heard and spoken that language every day of their lives since they first left their mothers' arms.

So much, then, for these special circumstances. With them before us it is now time to consider the aims which should be borne in mind in teaching the high school pupil English. And I shall assume, for my immediate purpose, that he begins English about the fifth class, and will continue its school study for six years; i.e., from about 11 to about 16 or 17 years of age. The question is, what aims must the teacher deliberately keep before him to enable his pupil to use English in the occupations and situations which have been exemplified above?

### *Fourfold Aims of the Teaching*

For purposes of exposition it is convenient to distinguish our aims as primarily four. We wish our pupil—

1. To speak English.
2. To understand it when spoken.
3. To understand it when written.
4. To write English.

Though this division is convenient for our exposition of method, the teacher will be careful to remember that in the practice of teaching these aims do not remain

severely separate. Each branch of language teaching bears upon and co-operates with every other branch, and periods on the time table will not be *rigidly* separated according to one or other of our chief aims. On the other hand, as we shall see later, it is necessary for the teacher to keep these four aims separately before his mind to avoid disproportionate attention to any one of them to the neglect of the others, and to be ready with special periodical and occasional exercises for the attainment of one or other of them in particular. These points will become clearer as we proceed.

For the moment we shall do well to try to arrive at some rough preliminary high school standards for each of these four objects of our language teaching. By keeping such standards before him the teacher will be able to avoid disproportion in his teaching.

Another important caution is supplied by the special obstacles to the success of English teaching already enumerated in this chapter, viz., that we must avoid the temptation of pitching our standards impossibly high. To do so is to court confusion, and perhaps disaster. We must, on the other hand, steadily limit our standards to those which in the circumstances we can fairly expect to be reached with reasonable intelligence and effort on the part of the teacher. This caution has a significant bearing on the question of the teaching of English literature (as distinct from language) in the high school, a point to be elaborated presently. But it also means control of enthusiasms as regards the four aims just enumerated; and I shall confine myself in each case to what the Americans call the 'minimal essential', to wit, the least that can satisfy requirements.

### *Speaking*

First, then, as regards speaking. Here our first and foremost requirement is ability to speak accurately and easily the ordinary language of daily conversation. At present few pupils attain to this. Ability to make set speeches, to address an audience in the language of oratory, comes a long way second, though it has its uses. At present college students are rather better in this than in the colloquial language of daily life. But the point



to remember here is that while familiarity with colloquial English supplies all, or nearly all, the vocabulary needed for continuous speaking before an audience, the converse—ability to make a speech of oratorical or literary flavour before an audience—is quite compatible with slowness and inaccuracy in conversation. Conversational skill we must certainly secure, even if we leave the pupil deficient in the power of *continuous* speaking.

Here, however, there is no need for despair, if only we observe one simple condition. This is a careful selection and restriction of the pupil's working vocabulary, to those commonest colloquial words and word-combinations, which, *once he has mastered them*, he will find serve him equally well whether in ordinary talk or in continuous speech. In other words, he must practise continuous speech with the same—or nearly the same—vocabulary as he is using for his ordinary conversation. Or, to put the same thing negatively, the teacher should make no special effort to teach a special vocabulary for speech making, but should rather encourage the pupil to use the words that come to him out of his daily talk. To sum up, *the standard to bear in mind as regards speaking is ability to converse in colloquial English, and to use the same simple English in continuous speeches.*

### *Understanding Spoken English*

Secondly, as regards understanding spoken English. At first sight it might appear that there is no need to distinguish this as a separate aim at all, since ability to speak English, or at any rate to converse in it, must carry with it ability to understand what others say; so that it is already covered in the first aim just discussed. To some extent this supposition is true—no one can utter words in a language aright without at the same time hearing himself utter them and understanding the words he utters. Still less, of course, can he converse with another intelligently without understanding what his companion is saying. The fact, however, remains that *power to speak oneself and the power to grasp what another is saying do not necessarily develop equally*—some people are better at speaking a language, some at understanding it when spoken. Of two individuals one may speak it

worse than another, and yet be as quick, or even quicker, at catching the drift of what he hears. What the teacher has to aim at, then, is that in his pupils one of these two powers shall not leave the other too far behind, that both shall be acquired up to the standard needed for carrying on a conversation easily, and for comprehending addresses or lectures without discouraging effort. We may be a little more definite and say that the standard to aim at is a power to understand ordinary daily English speech, and the speech of addresses or lectures of an untechnical character, spoken at a normal speed. The last point is important, and will help to determine the methods to be suggested later for attaining this object.

### *Understanding Written English*

Our third aim was that of understanding written English. By written is meant both the English of ordinary correspondence and English in print. But here our five special circumstances again counsel caution. We shall be wasting time and trouble if we pitch our standards too high. It is, for instance, cardinal that a clear distinction be observed between writing that claims to be literature and the common and commonplace writing of daily life. To the literature of a foreign language the ordinary pupil has to grow, and grow slowly, and often he cannot hope to attain it at all. And in any case *his approach to literature should always be through the mother language first*. Besides this it is through a mastery of ordinary commonplace English that the surest path to literary appreciation lies. We may divide the pupils that pass through our high schools into two classes, those who go on to the University and those who end their formal education at the high school stage. But for both classes the same principle holds good; for those who enter on a livelihood on leaving the high school, because working daily English is their prime need; and for those who aspire to appreciate English authors as college students, because *unless they appreciate commonplace English first they are less likely to appreciate literary English afterwards*. To a foreign literature a prosaic not a primrose path must be pursued.

The means by which the pupil can be best prepared

for an appreciation of good writing in English will be treated in a later chapter. The point to insist on here is that the standard to which we can normally expect to bring the school pupil in his six years' part-time study of English in the high school is ability to understand, without discouraging effort, simple untechnical English,

(a) of ordinary correspondence,

(b) of newspapers,

(c) of suitable school text-books on subjects taught through the medium of English,

(d) of books on subjects touching the pupil's ordinary life and interests, in plain modern English that can serve equally, or almost equally well, for the pupil's own writing and conversation.

### *Language and Literature*

To attempt more than this (to expect, for example, an appreciative study of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*) is merely to waste effort; it is indeed to engender in the pupil mental confusion and linguistic inefficiency; because we shall be teaching the pupil in the name of English two (or more) languages at the same time, the colloquial—the language of daily use—and a literary language, or more than one literary language if the diction and vocabulary of one author chosen for reading differs considerably from that of another. The only true economy is to teach one language thoroughly, and that must be the language needed in practical life. *To aim at literature is to miss the way to language. To aim at language is to pave the way to literature.* These two sentences should be learnt by heart by every teacher of English in Indian high schools. Familiarize the pupil with familiar English all along, and you kill two birds with one stone. Aim two stones at the two birds separately, and you run a risk of missing both.

### *Writing English*

Lastly, the high school pupil should be able to write English. The reader will have no difficulty in defining the standard to be aimed at here. The pupil should be able on leaving school to write a letter on matters of ordinary

interest to him, he must be familiar with the commonest forms of correspondence to friends, relatives, tradesmen, and the few types of officials to whom he may have occasion to address letters. Besides this, he should be able to use the language that he has learnt to speak in writing on his own personal experience, his ordinary needs, wishes, hopes and fears; and again, on some of the matter met with in other subjects of his curriculum. But on abstract subjects or on subjects not spontaneously at work in his mind already, we must studiously avoid setting him to write *in English*. The use of language for developing fresh thought is the business of the teacher of the vernacular, not of the teacher of English, and if the teacher of the vernacular neglects this duty, we may remember that it is also incidental to the teaching of other subjects of the curriculum, and that to exercise the pupil in thinking out fresh matter, or, which is much the same thing, in trying to understand difficult ideas, is to divert his energies from practice in language to exercises in thought. It is a cardinal principle—a principle of economy—in *teaching a modern foreign language for daily use to avoid adding difficulty of matter to difficulty of language*. To do so is to divert time and effort we can ill spare from our practice in language. It is to impose two difficulties at the same time.

### *Grammar*

With this rough preliminary statement of aims we may proceed to suggest main principles of method. In doing this our aims will appear in greater definiteness and detail. But we may conclude this chapter by a reference to one omission that may perhaps have struck the reader—the omission from our aims of any mention of grammar. There is, however, reason for this omission. For if there is one principle as regards the teaching of grammar which the teacher of English will do wisely to accept at the outset, it is that *he need never trouble his pupil with a knowledge of grammar rules so long as that pupil can read, write, speak and understand English without it*. Just as Englishmen use their language correctly without making conscious to themselves the rules of grammar they are observing, so there is no need to make

## 10 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

these conscious to the Indian pupil if he can dispense with their aid. Sometimes to teach a rule may be true economy, but this is not to teach grammar for its own sake, or to make it a separate aim in our teaching of English. Where grammar teaching comes in, it is as part of our method of attaining one of the four aims already treated, and in the chapter on grammar its use will be considered from this point of view.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD

1. There are four principles which should govern our procedure, if we are to save time and labour in attaining the four aims given in the last chapter. They are these:—

(a) The method should be primarily a practice method.

(b) Oral work should have a predominant place from the outset, and a prominent place throughout.

(c) The different branches of the teaching should co-operate, and the teaching of English should make the best use of the pupil's knowledge and study of the vernacular.

(What that best use is will be considered later.)

(d) The language teaching should all along connect closely with the pupil's life.

To consider these in order:—

#### FIRST PRINCIPLE

##### *A Practice Method*

The first principle is the most important, though it is a principle the real significance of which is constantly overlooked by teachers of English in this country. The fact to bear in mind is that English is taught in India in order that it may be used as a medium of communication in ordinary life. In this it contrasts sharply with Oriental classical languages, Arabic, Sanskrit, and, we may venture to add, Persian. These languages are taught primarily to give the pupil access to a literature—a literature written not in language spoken in daily life, or, at any rate, not in a language intended for the pupil's ordinary speech and daily use. For this purpose it is sufficient if the study of these languages is carried to the point of accurate and fairly rapid understanding of

## 12 SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD

matter read—and, as a rule, read silently. But in learning English what the pupil has to acquire first and foremost is the art of expressing himself in the foreign language, whether in speaking or writing, and the art of silent reading will be found—for reasons to be given later—to follow on, and largely to derive from these. Now the power of expression in any language is a matter of skill rather than of knowledge; it is a power that grows by *exercise*, not by merely knowing meanings or rules.

A pupil will make little progress in speaking or writing English by learning the dictionary, or by memorizing all the rules of English syntax. If he is to make progress in using English correctly and easily, this he can do most rapidly and effectually by practising English speaking and writing till the English he practises becomes automatic. What he has to do, in a word, is to acquire speech habits, to accumulate as soon as possible that particular set of fresh speech habits which will serve his ordinary needs best. The new pronunciation, articulation, intonation, must become so habitual that the pupil uses them rightly *without having to think*, and so must the common English constructions, and a number of words, word-combinations, and sentences, those, in fact, of most use for most purposes of ordinary life: for the commonest and most familiar purposes first, for less common and somewhat less familiar afterwards. *English in the high school is primarily a skill, not a knowledge, subject*, and the teacher's earliest and always main concern is to be developing skill—not merely to be imparting bits of information. Indeed the teaching of rules, or of meanings in isolation, apart from practice, may actually retard the pupil's progress, by leading him to be constantly referring to rules or meanings in his mind when he should be uttering his English directly, spontaneously. It is *habits of unreflective right utterance* that have by every means in the teacher's power to be instilled. And just as there is no way of learning to ride a bicycle except by riding it, and riding it in the right way as soon as possible, *so there is no way of learning to speak or write English except by speaking and writing it, and by forming right habits of speech and*

## SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD 13

*writing from the very start. This is the direct method of teaching English*, because it is the shortest route to the goal, in contrast with other methods which, being more round about, may be called indirect.

### SECOND PRINCIPLE

#### *Predominance of Oral Work*

Oral work should predominate from the outset and have a prominent place throughout.

There are several reasons why in learning English the pupil should acquire ability in speaking as soon as possible.

(a) Oral practice is the quickest way of getting started. Speaking is quicker than writing or reading, because it makes a direct connection between hearing and utterance. When the pupil imitates in speech the words and sentences of others, he does so directly, without any difficulty intervening. But in order to write he has first to learn how to make written symbols—a laborious process; and in order to read he has first to learn to interpret visible symbols in sounds, and to connect with each symbol or set of symbols its corresponding sound. Writing and reading are thus indirect or mediate acquirements; speaking, as compared with them, is immediate or direct. Thus *it takes far less time for pupils to make early progress in using language by speaking than by first trying to write or read it*. To make progress in use of language as soon as possible has a valuable psychological effect on the pupil; it supplies a stimulus and an interest in going ahead which is lacking or lessened where the sense of progress is not present. •

(b) There is another reason why this interest is increased by giving oral practice first place. To be able to speak a language makes that language more living and real to a child than to be able to read or write it. In the use of his mother tongue it is through speaking that he has been accustomed to make known to others the thoughts, feelings and needs of his daily and hourly life. Writing and reading have a minor and occasional place only in communicating with those around him.



## 14 SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD

They are learnt later, and appear to him as extras, rather than as the essentials of his language. Speaking is the main thing. Thus it comes about that in acquiring a foreign language, the child feels the language to be real and vital and useful, and therefore interesting, as he learns to use it in speaking, and in speaking about things that most often touch his life, and come into his mind. If we would engage the pupil's interest from the outset, and forestall a risk of discouraging him through the difficulty and unreality of his study, we must start him speaking the language as soon as possible.

(c) A reason, which is especially telling in India, for ensuring early progress as rapidly as possible in speaking is that the pupil is expected to be able to converse in English, and to understand spoken English, by the time he leaves the high school, and that to an extent far greater than is required in the case of the ordinary English pupil in England learning a modern foreign language. Moreover, since in India English becomes the medium of instruction in subjects other than English even in the school stage itself, a special effort has to be made to prepare the pupil for learning and speaking English without undue difficulty in his other lessons.

Whether English should be a medium of teaching at all in the high school stage is a question I shall not try to answer in this chapter, but so long as it remains a medium, there is strong additional reason for insistence on rapid early progress in speaking and understanding spoken English.

(d) Lastly, there is a particular constituent of spoken language which for special reasons should be acquired at the start, namely, a correct, or at least a generally intelligible, pronunciation, including in the term pronunciation not only the utterance of isolated sounds, but the articulation of sounds and words in combination, and a correct English intonation. Here we should begin by securing the right speech habits, both because the organs of pronunciation are the more plastic, and the less set in other directions, the younger the pupils, and also because the actual alternative to a correct pronunciation is an incorrect pronunciation, that is to say, if the pupil does not learn to pronounce

correctly he will form habits of pronouncing incorrectly, and it is easier to learn the right habits at the outset than to unlearn wrong ones and learn right ones later on. For both reasons the direct method, the method of economy, is to *give special exercises and practice in pronunciation at the start.*

There is one reason for early attention to speech which I have deliberately not yet mentioned, because it applies with much less force in teaching the child English than in teaching him his mother tongue; namely, the very high value of practice in speaking, particularly in continuous speaking, as an intellectual training. In order to speak continuously and effectively on any topic the speaker has to acquire the three habits of *gathering* his ideas, *arranging* them in the best order for communication, and choosing the best language in which to *convey* his meaning. And all this he has to learn to do at reasonable speed. This training in the rapid organization and communication of thought is given by no school exercise so well as by practice in continuous speaking properly taught. 'Conference maketh a ready man.' And it is an acquirement clearly invaluable in life to any man—an acquirement the possession or absence of which makes a great difference in the individual's occupational and social efficiency and happiness. Besides this, it is the best possible preparation for the power of expression in writing, and has a bearing upon progress in reading also.

But for all this, it is through the mother tongue that this intellectual training ought primarily to be given. The reason for this has been suggested elsewhere. In learning to speak a *foreign* language we shall be wasting time if we add to the difficulty of expression difficulties caused by the matter to be expressed: it is the expression in the foreign language that the pupil should concern himself with, not the collecting and ordering of the matter. In the case of English teaching in India this policy of economy is the more advisable, because of the high standard of expression which has to be attained and the adverse circumstances which retard progress. We can afford to waste time over no procedures that deflect from, or hinder the attainment of, our main

## 16 SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD

object. The teacher must be severe with himself in this matter. He must constantly be revising his practice with an eye on economy.

Besides this, the habit of intellectual organization must be inculcated early in the pupil's school career, and the early period of his career is that in which his habitual medium of thought is his mother tongue. *Some* habit of thought and speech he will be acquiring in any case whether he is taught right habits or none at all. But if not taught to organize his thinking, the probabilities are that it is habits of disorganization that he will be forming, habits that will afterwards be counteracted with added difficulty, or only partially, or not at all.

On the other hand, habits of orderly thinking and expression acquired early in the mother tongue will continue to operate when he comes to learn a foreign language, and so will immensely facilitate his progress. *For learning English begun at eleven or twelve years of age, to have first learnt to speak well in the vernacular is an invaluable preparation.* Yet unfortunately this need of oral practice from early childhood is often overlooked by teachers in primary classes, who prefer to concentrate upon reading and writing, because in their view these can be taught and tested more easily in the mass.

From what has just been said it will be easy to understand why *oral practice should hold a prominent place throughout the course*, and not predominate merely at the start. At no point can the teacher afford to relax his attention to it, if the pupil is to reach the standards required for the use of English as a medium of instruction or as a medium of ordinary communication and converse at the stage at which these acquirements are expected of him. And at every stage the truth equally applies that both in general and in particular lesson units, oral practice is the most economical introduction to written work. This brings us to our third main principle of method, viz.,

### THIRD PRINCIPLE

#### *Teaching the Language Branches together*

The different branches of the teaching should co-operate, and the teaching of English should make the

best use of the pupil's knowledge and study of the vernacular.

Here, as elsewhere, our prime consideration is that of economy, the taking of the most direct route to our goal. The time is not long past, if indeed it is yet past altogether, when the different language arts were taught in separation—whether in teaching a foreign language or in teaching a mother tongue. The separate branches of the teaching appeared separately upon the timetable—certain periods were assigned to reading, others to grammar, others to writing exercises, essays or dictation, and others or sometimes none at all to speech. And the topics for these different exercises were different, the syllabuses having little direct bearing upon one another. Equally in the mother tongue and in English, this custom of dissociation meant a dissipation of energy. The pupil came to each branch of his study without the advantage of freshly gained previous knowledge or attainment to go upon. The help that progress in one branch of study might afford to progress in another was regularly withheld. On the other hand, to expose the bearings of what is being done in one branch of study upon what is being done in another is true economy as well in learning a language as in all education whatsoever. Clearly it is a positive aid to memory to bring into one lesson what is already being treated in another. It is confirming and reinforcing, or recapitulating, old matter through a fresh connection. But it saves time also by avoiding the introduction of fresh matter when other matter already familiar will serve as well, as, for example, where the examples chosen for grammatical study are taken from a text recently read, or when the pupil is invited to describe in writing what he has already described orally, or bring in certain usages noted in his reading passage when writing a composition upon an allied subject.

But thirdly,—and this is the most permanent contribution to his general education—the habit of relating the related, of discovering the connections between different sets of facts or ideas, is an invaluable constituent of an educated and efficient personality: the man who can detect the many bearings of a question at

## 18 SOME CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF METHOD

issue or bring to the solution of a problem ideas from a variety of sources, has a decisive advantage in all but the most mechanical occupations in life over his fellow who keeps his mind in separate compartments. *The teacher, then, who is careful to relate and co-ordinate the different branches of his language teaching is promoting his pupil's linguistic and general educational progress at the same time.*

But to leave the reader with this general injunction to co-ordinate is not enough for our purpose. He should also be aware of the most economical types of co-ordination worth observing, and specifically of the sequence in which connections should be set up. These will be treated in detail in a later chapter. But preliminary propositions may conveniently be laid down here. The most important are these :—

(a) Practice in hearing should precede, and provide matter for practice in speaking.

(b) Speaking should precede, and provide matter for writing.

(c) Speaking should precede reading in the sense that the pupil's *first* attempts at reading should be confined to language and matter already familiar orally. But at a later stage,

(d) Reading may provide both language and matter for practice in converse and continuous speaking, and this again for written exercises.

(e) Such grammatical teaching as is serviceable should draw for its material upon language already familiar.

The second part of the third principle, the relation of the teaching of English to the pupil's mother tongue, is reserved for treatment in Chapter IX. Here it is enough to point out that it is only another application of the principles of co-ordination already mentioned, and for that reason, another expedient of economy. But a summary of types of connection in the teaching of the two languages it would probably be more helpful to postpone to a detailed consideration, when it will be also convenient to attempt to define and evaluate a particular teaching expedient popularly mistaken for the direct method.

## FOURTH PRINCIPLE

*Connection with the Pupil's Life*

*The language teaching should all along connect closely with the pupil's life.* This, like the third principle, is a recognition of the need of co-ordinating whatever we are teaching with other living interests of the pupil, if we are firstly to make what is taught appeal to him as worth his while, and secondly, to impress and establish it in his mind by bringing it constantly into action. As a writer on the organization of thought has said, 'Education with inert ideas is not only useless: it is, above all things, harmful!' And the converse of this proposition, that ideas to be of value must be active, and therefore at work in the pupil's daily life, applies as much to the teaching of a modern foreign language as to all other teaching. To the teaching of English in India it applies with special force, because it is definitely in order that he may use the language as an ordinary channel of communication that English appears in the pupil's curriculum at all.

In future chapters we shall see the bearing of this principle in many directions, specifically in the choice of the vocabulary to be taught, in the procedure adopted for its practice, in the choice of matter and language in readers for intensive study, in the choice of topics for oral and written composition, of sentences or expressions for memorizing, and even of matter for grammatical treatment.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE

THE course of the English teaching in the high school falls roughly into three main stages. In the first the work is mainly oral—hearing and speaking practice predominate, with exercises in reading or writing which as they begin, take off, as it were, from the language already familiar to the pupil's ear and voice.

In the second or intermediate stage the language teaching centres round the reading book which supplies most of the matter for speech and writing and for such grammatical drill as is necessary.

The third or specifically high department stage differs from the middle stage in the greater range and freedom of choice for language exercises. The pupil is expected to leave the high school able to speak and write independently of special preparation and on any topics of ordinary interest that may occur to him. Consequently an attempt has to be made at this stage, if at all, to break away from the limitations of the reader and to encourage exercises in speaking and writing on matter drawn not only from the text of the reader, but from experiences, actual or imagined, outside it but still within the range of ordinary life. At the same time wider reading will be encouraged as individual pupils become capable of it, and some definite approach may be possible with selected pupils towards teaching them to appreciate *some* English literature, though with the majority of pupils, schools, and teachers, to attempt to teach literature would be waste of time.

It is with the first stage that this chapter is concerned primarily, though in some cases it will not be convenient, nor will it make for clearness, to restrict our discussion severely to the first year or two of English, and it must always be remembered that there is no sudden line of demarcation between the three stages so far distinguished.

In the beginnings of his learning of English the pupil will be occupied in three main pursuits :

- (a) The accumulation of a working vocabulary.
- (b) The practice of that vocabulary.
- (c) The acquisition of a correct pronunciation.

To take these in turn :—

### *The Working Vocabulary*

It is unnecessary to reiterate the leading principles which govern the selection of the words and word-combinations which should form the pupil's early language circle. He is concerned from the outset with the accumulation of a working company of words and expressions, constantly adding fresh acquaintances as he makes close friends with those he already knows.

1. The choice of his earliest acquaintances is based primarily on utility. His earliest friends are words and expressions which, as a pupil in a class-room, can serve him most readily for speaking practice at the start. *This will be the vocabulary of class-room objects and actions, and of the expressions and sentences used in conducting the lessons themselves.*

Room, floor, wall, desk, boy, child, man, teacher, inkpot, blackboard, chair, seat, wood, pen, pencil, hand, eye, head, foot, door, window, sit, stand, look, walk, go, come, write, rub out, open, shut, speak, answer—here is a number of isolated words that may occur to any teacher as coming within the scope of our rule.

But before he sets to work the teacher should impress on his mind a few cautions.

### *Sentence Practice*

(a) *Practice should be in sentences, and useful sentences, from the outset.* As emphasized before, the pupil must feel that he is making progress, and that what he is learning is of real use to him in life. He should, therefore, from the beginning use English for expressing his thoughts. And ordinarily to express a thought we require a sentence—a single word does not suffice!

There is another reason for insisting on sentence practice from the outset. The pronunciation of a word



in isolation is sometimes not the same as its pronunciation in combination, and the repeated uttering of words in isolation before they are put together in sentences will lead to a 'staccato' or jerky utterance of sentences, which is not in accordance with English usage. In English the custom is to run the words of a sentence more together in speaking than, for example, in Urdu. So that the pupil must be prevented at the outset from carrying over into his English a habit of uttering sentences which he has acquired with his mother tongue. The learning of a modern foreign language is the acquiring of fresh speech habits, and this sentence articulation habit in English is one of them.

Sentence practice, therefore, must begin with the first lesson, and occupy a large place in the early stage of study. This, however, must not be taken to mean that the pupil is never to be introduced to a new word in isolation. On the contrary it may be true economy to focus his attention on a new word till he makes sure of it. The extent to which this is advisable will vary with the difficulty the word presents to the pupil's memory. No rigid rule need be laid down here. But it does mean that *all new words should be practised and used in sentences* in order to familiarize the pupil with them and habituate him to their right use.

Now a word's use may be right or wrong in more ways than one. The word may be mispronounced in combination, or it may be used in a wrong meaning, or it may be used in a wrong context. So far as the teacher can himself speak ordinary English aright, by making his pupil practise sentences containing new words which he wishes to impress, he is at one and the same time teaching him correct utterance of those words, insensibly filling out their meaning for him, and, also insensibly, accustoming him to the kind of contexts in which these words find themselves at home.

This brings me to a second caution.

#### *Practice of Word-Combination*

(b) *Not only single words, but common, serviceable word-combinations should be taught the pupil, and added in their entirety to his vocabulary.* One of the difficulties in

acquiring a language so highly developed as English is, as has been hinted, that the question whether you can use a certain word or not in a particular case is not to be answered merely by knowing its meaning. Words have special affinities or hostilities to other words and to varying moods and styles. The foreigner who has acquired English by learning meanings and then building up sentences from words expressing his meanings is always betraying himself by the strangeness, to the English ear, of his word-combinations. Where the native Englishman would automatically employ a certain word, this foreigner will use another.

An example or two will illustrate this point. An Indian student of college standing has been found committing the following mistakes :—

THE STUDENT'S UNIDIO- MATIC SENTENCES	IDIOMATIC ENGLISH
(a) I have <i>done</i> a sin.	I have <i>committed</i> a sin.
(b) He was <i>welcomed</i> with a hard blow.	He was <i>greeted</i> with a hard blow.
(c) I was <i>confused</i> what to do next.	I was <i>perplexed</i> what to do next.
(d) I jumped over <i>the wall of the compound</i> .	I jumped over the <i>compound wall</i> .
(e) I <i>lighted</i> a candle wax.	I <i>lit</i> a candle.
(f) I <i>went to a sound sleep</i> .	I <i>fell into a sound sleep</i> .

(Clearly an expansion in the student's mind of the idiomatically correct 'I went to sleep'.)

There is nothing grammatically wrong in these sentences, and in each case the words taken separately express the meaning required—but the Englishman does not use them in these combinations. The correct combinations have, therefore, to be learnt as combinations.

It would, of course, be unreasonable to expect the ordinary Indian school teacher of English to be free from such errors himself, though, as will be pointed out in the chapter on the preparation of the teacher of English, much more might be done than is done at present to improve his ordinary English speech habits. But he knows a great deal more ordinary English than his pupil, and he can generally trust himself with a large number of word contexts in the circle of very common

## 24 THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE

English to which the pupil is restricted at the start. So the teacher is not exempt from the duty of habituating his pupil to such context habits as will form a nucleus for further habits later. On the other hand it must equally be realized that the full range of meaning and use of words is an acquisition which even the native Englishman secures only gradually, after repeatedly encountering the word in all sorts of sentences and styles of writing and speaking in the course of his conversation and reading. To be word perfect in this respect is the mark of a high level of linguistic education.

But a point in method where the teacher can assist the pupil here is in the teaching of those word-combinations which are so common and have so definite a meaning and usage as to be for all practical purposes single words. The commonest of these should be introduced into the pupil's early vocabulary. Here are a few examples taken at random—

at any rate, by no means, all the same, on the top of, at top speed, of course, not at all, as a rule, to make fun of, once in a while, now and then, plenty of, to lend a hand, at the risk of, more often than not, at all costs, to make sure of, to and fro, very well, with pleasure.

Some of the simpler and more common compound words (to give them a name) of this kind should be purposely included in the pupil's working vocabulary, and used in sentences like single words till he is able to use them correctly and with confidence himself.

### *Parts of Speech*

(c) The third caution is that the early vocabulary should contain a fair proportion of the more essential parts of speech for sentence making.

Nouns, common personal pronouns, and verbs, have precedence here; adjectives, adverbs and prepositions are second in importance. Conjunctions come in incidentally, chiefly (excepting the few most common) as the pupil becomes capable of more than a single sentence at a time. It is a mistake to confine the pupil to a list of nouns at the outset; verbs should, indeed must, if he is to form sentences, enter into his earliest lessons. 'Is'

and 'are' and other tenses of the verb 'to be' should quickly be supplemented by other verbs in common use.

### *A Concrete Vocabulary*

In regard to the choice of this

(d) *The more the vocabulary refers to the concrete and visible at the outset the better.* Nouns representing visible and near objects, verbs of action, especially of actions that the pupil and teacher can perform easily on the spot, adjectives of qualities explicable from the concrete ('small', 'white', 'square', rather than 'beautiful', 'sad', 'good'), prepositions of place ('on top of', 'below', 'beside', 'under', 'in', 'on', etc., rather than 'except', 'but', 'for', 'about', etc.)—if these are preferred for the earliest vocabulary, the advantage is secured of the vocabulary being more easily impressed, being more vivid, and more easily remembered than where no connection with the visible can be readily made. The lesson also gains in interest to the young pupil, and admits of that avoidance of the vernacular as a means of interpretation on which some 'direct methodists' lay stress.

2. We have mentioned class-room objects and actions, and words of class-room conduct and commands, as suitable material for the beginner's working vocabulary.

### *Use of Pictures*

From this nucleus, once it has been sufficiently mastered, the vocabulary should gradually expand, the circle widening to include expressions for ideas frequent in the pupil's mind, and common in his daily vernacular speech, but no longer confined to the range of the class-room or of the immediately visible. Here the English of the pupil can enter the region of his home life, and it is a great help in graduating the transition from that which is in the class-room to that which is definitely beyond its range, between that which can be explained or impressed visually and that which is beyond the reach of the eye, if the teacher has at his service a suitable set of pictures. For pictures, it will be noticed, can make visible what is not present in the class-room itself; and

thus can extend the range of language the teaching of which can have immediate visual associations.

*The ideal gradation after the first stage is passed, is to pass to topics of common home life, the bias being still towards the concrete rather than the reflective, with large wall pictures of the very commonest scenes of ordinary Indian life as a supplementary aid.* If such pictures are not yet on the market, some help may be available from illustrations in periodicals or even from picture post-cards, but the production of a set of scenes of Indian domestic life to be used in the training of teachers of English and in the class-room afterwards should be included as part of the provision made for the teaching of English in every Indian province.

At this point we may leave the topic of the choice of vocabulary for the moment, in order to consider the use to which that vocabulary should be put.

## VOCABULARY PRACTICE

### *Pupils' Question Practice*

(a) We have already mentioned that sentence practice should continue from the outset. An important point to note here is that the *pupil not the teacher should do most of the speaking*, and that all pupils in a class should have as much practice as is compatible with the securing of accuracy by the teacher's help. A common means of enlisting the pupil's activity is by question and answer practice, and this may be included as one expedient in our procedure. It is not, however, the only one, and where the teacher does all the questioning and the pupils all the answering the result in the pupil's language progress is onesided. *The pupils should practise questioning as well as the teacher.* One means of securing this practice is for the teacher to set answers to which the pupil can find suitable questions, and in this case there is no need for him to put his answer in complete sentences—e.g.,

'On the desk.' (Where is the book?)

'At four this afternoon.' (When do we go home?)

'Because he is hungry.' (Why does Mohan Lal eat breakfast?)

'To write with.' (What is the use of a pencil?  
or What is a pencil for?)

Some skill is needed here in framing answers to which it is easy to find suitable questions, but it is not necessary that only one question should be possible or only one be accepted by the teacher as right if there are others equally appropriate. Also gesture or action may accompany the answer where helpful, as when the teacher puts a pencil on the desk while uttering the answer 'on this front desk', thus limiting or directing the pupils in choice of appropriate questions.

The pupils should be early familiarized with the introductory question words—'what', 'where', 'when', and later with 'how', and 'why', first by hearing them used in question sentences by the teacher, and then by practising themselves. This question practice on the part of the pupils is particularly important in teaching English because the word order in a question in English differs from that in a statement, and in this contrasts with the speech habit of the mother tongue. Unless he is specially drilled in the English question order, the pupil inevitably transfers his vernacular speech habit to his question sentence in English, and at present one speech defect common amongst college students and not rare even amongst graduates is an erroneous word order in asking a question in English. This speech defect may be due sometimes to the student having acquired the wrong order from his teacher at school (the teacher having suffered similarly in his time, thus setting up a vicious circle), but it is also often due to insufficient drill of the pupil in asking questions early in his language career, because the teacher regards the ordinary oral lesson as one in which he puts the questions, and the pupils give the answers.

Of course other methods of practice in questions suggest themselves beside the one described above. Making pupils repeat questions after the teacher, singly or in groups, is one of them. Getting individual pupils to question others or the teacher is another; or, again, dividing a class into sides for a question game, one side questioning the other, and points being scored or lost for correct or incorrect questions or answers to decide

## 28 THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE

the winners. Or the pupils may be set to think out five or six sensible questions, given a definite topic and introductory words for each question. But any teacher of intelligence can devise methods for himself, bearing in mind that there is interest in variety. He will bore the pupils by adhering to one method all the time.

### *Language Drill*

(b) It is well to reiterate here the purpose of the language teaching, namely, the acquisition of speech habits, not simply of conscious knowledge. Habits are automatic and spontaneous, the pupil, that is, must learn to speak accurately without hesitating or thinking out his sentences. That being so, *the teacher should not be afraid of language drill ; of making his pupils repeat some fresh sentence or sentence form over and over again.* For this purpose a convenient plan is to alternate individual and simultaneous practice. First the individual pupil may repeat, then a group or succession of groups, each small enough for the teacher to hear what each pupil is saying, then the whole class, the teacher stopping now and then to pick out a pupil here and there to test his accuracy or attention. Simultaneous practice of this kind, provided the trouble is taken to avoid mechanical and careless individual repetition, is a measure of economy, and helps to solve the problem of securing in a lesson period enough practice in speech from each pupil in a class.

In the ideal the class for beginners should be limited to twenty pupils, but this ideal is not likely to be attained at present.

### *Memorizing Sample Sentences*

(c) With a view to assist the formation of particular speech habits *the pupil should regularly learn sample sentences by heart.* Care should be exercised in selecting sentences for memorizing. They have to be such as illustrate clearly some usage, word-combination, or construction, in which experience shows that pupils are apt to go wrong or find special difficulty in forming the new habit. Sample sentences form a kind of mental reference library, and in most cases serve better as a

guide to correct practice than deliberately memorized rules. The question order of words is a case in point—a pupil will form the habit of putting the auxiliary first and the subject afterwards in a simple question by learning off by heart the sentences ‘Does he write with a pencil?’ or ‘Did he write on the board?’ than by memorizing the abstract rule. *Sentences should not be set for memorizing which have not been previously treated in a lesson*, and after memorization should be revised or tested on the following day. The usages which they illustrate can then by future application gradually work their way into the pupil’s habitual vocabulary or circle of familiar expressions.

#### *Grouping the Vocabulary*

(d) Memory is also assisted by treating the new vocabulary in groups which have a common topic or connecting bond. The bond, however, in this case must be one of working utility, that is, the group must be one in which the associated expressions will be likely to be associated in actual use in life. To base word groups on phonic associations, for example, is to miss this point: we do not require in ordinary speaking on things of interest to us to put together words of uniform sound in particular, but we choose our vocabulary according to the topic in hand. It is for this reason that primers which base their choice of words on similarity of sound, taking for example the short ‘a’ or ‘i’ first, and confining themselves to words of one syllable, are unreal and uninteresting, and discourage memorization, because they present their matter and, therefore, their language in combinations which the pupil is not likely to want in his ordinary speaking or writing. We do not, in speaking, confine ourselves to words of one syllable: we choose the words which fit the meanings we would express, irrespective of their length or vowel similarities.

For vocabulary practice, then, *a common topic is a suitable basis for choice of vocabulary*. Examples of this are class-room furniture, parts of a desk, some parts of the body, common colours, a book and its parts, the blackboard, expressions of asking and answering, getting up in the morning, preparing a meal, bodily movements



## 30 THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE

(walking, running, etc.), telling the time, how to sharpen a pencil, etc.

### *Association and Contrast*

(e) A further principle of association of use for introducing and practising new vocabulary is *association by similarity and contrast*. Words of the same, and words of opposite or rather of contrasted meaning, can be taught together, black at the same time as white, high and low, big and small, short and tall, above and below, to cry and to laugh, to eat and to drink, to love and to hate, often and seldom, always and never, and so on. Synonyms may also be taught together, or here again words of mainly similar meaning; for few words have exact synonyms.

In point of fact meanings shade off very gradually from precise to rough similarity, and again from rough similarity to slight and more pronounced dissimilarity, and so on to contrasts and opposites. So that it may be sometimes difficult to decide whether a pair of words should be classed as synonyms or antonyms,<sup>1</sup> as, for example, clock and watch, or white and grey, or dark and black, or fetch and bring. This does not matter in practice as in any case the benefit secured is to make more clear the meaning of each word of a sense pair or group by confronting its meaning with that of a fellow-word of the same class or genus. Both words gain in definiteness in the process.

### *Grouping by Form*

(f) Grouping by similarity of sense can be supplemented by grouping by similarity of root or derivation, as when the pupil learns together life, live, alive (and later on livelihood, and enliven); sleep and asleep; high and height; tale and tell; true and truth, and so on. Care must be taken to bar from the list all but common words which would claim admission to the pupil's vocabulary through their daily utility. There should be no word-making of this kind for its own sake. The device is of most use as a means of recapitulation, where words taught on one basis can then be revised and

<sup>1</sup> Antonyms are words of contrasted meaning.

re-grouped on another, thus establishing two systems of association.

### *Pronunciation*

It is not my purpose here to deal at length with the subject of pronunciation, which is better elaborated in conjunction with a study of phonetics. The scientific study of speech sounds has made a great advance in recent years, and round the teaching of correct utterance a body of methods has collected that requires a volume to itself. There is no doubt that a thorough practical grounding in phonetic principles and methods is a weapon invaluable to a teacher of oral English; and there is no doubt in the mind of the writer that the use of phonetic script or of simplified spelling, or of some intermediate device like phonoscript in the early readers would mean greater progress in less time both in speaking and reading, if the teacher were a competent phonetician.

In default of this special training and these specially prepared reading books the ordinary teacher can still adopt a number of useful measures.

To begin with he must be impressed with the necessity of attending to pronunciation from the very beginning of the course, seeing that the younger the pupil the more plastic are his vocal organs, and, unless special steps are taken to forestall them, vernacular habits of utterance will inevitably dominate the pupil's pronunciation of English wherever there is a sufficient resemblance of sound between the two to encourage this line of least resistance. In other words, the pupil will always tend to substitute for any new English sound the sound that seems most like it in his vernacular, and he will do this, unless corrected, without knowing that he is doing it. The reason he does not know this is, as a rule, because he fails to hear the difference. When the English sound is uttered before him, it is the vernacular nearest equivalent to which his ear has been long attuned, that he actually hears: slight, though significant differences escape his notice.

From these premises certain rules of action follow:—

(a) Assuming that the teacher can detect the differences himself, he should *isolate for separate practice the*

*sounds in English which are new to the pupil*, and give special exercises in those which present most difficulty; and in which the two languages are slightly dissimilar. Sounds associated with the English 'th', 'w', 'v', 't', 's', 'a' (in *all*), 'r' and 'sh' or 'sch' are instances of this ensnaring similarity-with-a-difference.

In uttering these sounds there should be regular class and individual drill.

In giving this practice

(b) *Sounds similar but not identical in the two languages should be presented in contrast*, to give the pupil the best chance of hearing the differences.

And so far as the teacher is capable

(c) The differences in the position of lips and tongue and teeth in uttering these pairs of sounds should be analysed and demonstrated; but this must be done with great care and definiteness, not, as one frequently sees in the class-room, in a perfunctory, vague and hasty manner. The pupil has to learn to make unaccustomed mouth movements; for pronunciation is only the vocal result of certain movements within the mouth, and varies as those movements vary. For this purpose the amateur should take the trouble to consult such a book as Ripman's *Sounds of Spoken English* (Dent).

It is perhaps wiser to omit this muscular demonstration and practice unless help is taken from a book or a phonetician first.

(d) This drill in isolated difficult sounds is only a preliminary to their correct use in words and sentences. Words are made up of sounds in combination, but though a mastery of common difficult sounds in isolation is indispensable to the correct pronunciation of words containing them, it does not follow that every word can be built up from common constituent sounds learnt separately. Some words exhibiting shades of differences from the normal, have special peculiarities.

Only a good linguist, however, can be expected to take note of these. For the ordinary teacher the important point in dealing with a new word which the pupil finds difficulty in pronouncing is to *detect, by listening, just where the mistake occurs, and to single out this part of the word for treatment*. To keep on repeating a whole

word of different parts or syllables over and over without locating the error is to waste time, to diffuse attention instead of concentrating it at the critical point. It is sometimes enough to separate out a syllable, but often a part of a syllable will require elimination, as in the 'sch' of 'school' or the 's' at the end of 'birds', or the 'a' in 'calf'.

(e) In giving this 'sound' drill a useful procedure is for the teacher first to utter the sound carefully himself, contrasting it if necessary with the vernacular sound with which it is confused, and then to single out one of the better pupils to imitate him, and then one of the worse pupils, before practising it in small sections or the whole class.<sup>1</sup> Here, as in all use of simultaneous speaking, *the habit must be cultivated of hearing the individual as well as the group*, of detecting any errors made by individual pupils.

(f) Besides exercises in isolated sound production and in mastering difficult words, practice is also required in uttering complete sentences *at ordinary English speed*.

In this the teacher has to attend to the run of words together, the way, that is, in which in English speaking the sounds of words join up or flow over from one word to the next, and secondly to that of the tone of voice or the foreign habit known as intonation. Success here clearly depends upon the teacher's accuracy of usage, whether in sentence articulation or in sentence intonation, and little can be said here of service to a teacher unaccustomed to attend to pronunciation niceties, skill in detecting which and in using that knowledge to advantage in teaching a language is best attained through systematic phonetic training.

#### \* *Need for Ear-training*

Nevertheless a teacher with a good ear and an accurate pronunciation of English can help his pupils to acquire the same by making them mimic his own articulation and intonation, and memorize sentences successfully mimicked.

<sup>1</sup> Professor H. E. Palmer (*The Principles of Language Study*, p. 23) would have chorus precede individual practice. The important thing is that each pupil should be sure of the sound he has to imitate before *all* are called upon to imitate it.

## 34 THE EARLY OR MAINLY ORAL STAGE

Perhaps the best counsel that can be given here is that the teacher uncertain of himself should get a phonetician to check his attainments, and advise as to the extent to which he can profitably communicate his own articulation and intonation to his pupils.

We may conclude this chapter by pointing out the extreme importance of ear-training in the pupil for the purpose of securing a correct pronunciation of a foreign language. It is an interesting anomaly that though the difference in sounds in one language and another may be very slight, yet the observance or non-observance of those differences in actual speech may make much difference to the intelligibility of the speaker. But here another fact may be added, of definite practical interest to the Indian teacher of English. For ready intelligibility when speaking to an Englishman an accurate *English* pronunciation (including articulation and intonation) is more important than when speaking to a fellow-Indian; for the simple reason that to the English hearer the slight differences that constitute the English pronunciation are so much more distinct to his ear through long familiarity, so that he has some difficulty in recognizing words uttered differently as the same words; whereas to the Indian an *Indian* pronunciation of English is quite familiar, or rather to an Indian speaker of one mother tongue that pronunciation of English is familiar which comes natural to his fellow-speakers of that same mother tongue.

### *Pronunciation standard of ready intelligibility*

The point is of practical interest, because it raises the question of the degree of accuracy of pronunciation that is worth aiming at in Indian high school teaching of English; and, therefore, of the time and trouble that it is worth while to spend on securing it, when we remember that time given to pronunciation exercises is time taken from other language objects. In the opinion of the writer to spend a great deal of time in an endeavour to secure perfect accuracy is not worth while, for more reasons than one. Firstly, the Indian teacher's own pronunciation is seldom or never quite accurate, and unless it is, his efforts would be in vain. But secondly

the great majority of pupils will be spending their lives in India, most of them in their own provinces, and here they will need to talk English to fellow-Indians and, to a varying extent, with Englishmen resident in India. In talking with fellow-Indians the Indian or provincial bias is no obstacle to intelligibility; while the Englishman resident in India soon attunes his ear to the Indian accent (using the word accent in its popular sense here). There is the special case of the Indian college student attending lectures given by English professors. Here it is true he has difficulty in understanding the lecturer at the start. But the experienced lecturer makes a point of adapting his pace and articulation to his students' requirements, and is especially careful about this at the beginning of the session. And by listening to him they gradually acquire the power of understanding an English speaker for themselves. This will prepare the few of them who go later to England for speaking English with natives of that country, and in any case it is usually the most intelligent and educated Indians who go there for further study. Consequently it would seem to be false economy to aspire in our high schools to anything more than a sufficiently intelligible English pronunciation with an Indian bias.

This does not mean, be it noted, that the insistence placed in this chapter on the value of a training in phonetics, or on pronunciation exercises from the beginning of the course, is misplaced. Some approach to accuracy of pronunciation is a condition of general intelligibility, and of attaining those approximations there are methods wasteful and methods economical. The trained phonetician will be acquainted with the latter. And besides this, *ear-training exercises and exercises in control and use of the voice provide an invaluable aid to effective speaking and the appreciation of literature*, whether in English or in the mother tongue. And it will save time and trouble in the end if these exercises begin young.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE DIRECT METHOD

BEFORE suggesting to the teacher examples of typical lesson procedures suitable to the early stage of English study, some conclusion is necessary as to the part to be played by the vernacular in these early lessons.

### *The Vernacular in Explaining Meanings*

I shall confine myself in this chapter to the use of the vernacular in interpreting meanings of English words or expressions. The teacher who has not been cautioned otherwise turns at once to the vernacular for the explanation of every fresh foreign word. It is a natural and a reasonable thing to do—natural, because it is human nature to avoid trouble, and reasonable because it is based on the accepted educational principle of using the known to elucidate the unknown.

In spite of this an opposite policy, that of avoiding as far as possible in teaching a modern foreign language the use of the vernacular for explanation, has been for several years widely advocated and practised in European countries, and has been popularized in many areas and schools in India. Teachers, and supervisors of teachers, have in fact been apt to push the new principle to an extreme, till the teacher has come to regard a resort to the vernacular as a fall from grace, and the parade of an ability to dispense with it has been too lightly accepted as a sign of merit in a teacher.

Experience is proving that in practice the pupil's progress is hindered by an adherence to either extreme, and that between never translating a new word or expression and always translating it that policy is surest which steers a middle course. There is a time to use the vernacular, and there is a time to avoid using it. It is

important, however, for the teacher not to mistake these times. In order to furnish him a principle to go on I shall begin by discussing a so-called 'Direct Method'.

The term direct method in teaching a modern foreign language is, by the ordinary teacher, taken to apply to the practice of connecting—or attempting to connect—the new word or expression with its meaning, not through the medium of the mother tongue, but, as the advocate of the method would put it, *directly* without that mediation. His argument is that in interposing the vernacular between the foreign word and its meaning, all you are doing is to substitute in the pupil's mind a foreign for a vernacular word. You are taking the familiar meaning of a word in the mother tongue, and giving it a new label. But to make a custom of this substitution is not, he will argue, to teach the foreign language, it is merely teaching the mother language over again with new designations for the same ideas. For to teach a foreign language is to teach new meanings, a new set of thoughts representing a different life, and merely to clothe old thoughts and old meanings in new coverings is to present the husk without the kernel.

An illustration will make the argument clear. Take the common English word 'well' and explain its meaning to a pupil by giving him the vernacular '*koen*'. The direct methodist will tell us that we shall not be teaching the foreign language, because the word 'well' in the usage of people talking English in England stands for a rather different object, and calls up a different image from that which is signified by '*koen*' to an Indian, say, in the Punjab. The Northern Indian may picture to himself the Persian wheel or the 'dingli', the Southern Indian may have a different picture; the Englishman one different from any of these. And it is the differences in that significance, he will add, not the similarities that make the essential difference between the one language and the other. Therefore, in teaching the word 'well' we shall only be misleading the pupil by introducing a vernacular synonym. We must keep his mind off that synonym as carefully as possible, and instead we must associate the new word directly with what it represents.



*Fallacy of an Extreme Direct Method*

Now this argument has a perfectly sound principle at its base. Our ideal in teaching any language is to convey with that language the ideas which that language expresses to the people using it. But there are important facts of time and space and of human nature that it overlooks. In the first place, the number of words which can be explained by *direct association with their meanings* is strictly limited; for the ordinary teacher it is limited by the four walls of his class-room and what they comprise and by the time at the teacher's disposal. 'Desk' and 'book' and 'head' and 'white' and 'walk' and 'laugh' may, no doubt, be interpreted directly by pointing to the corresponding objects, or performing the corresponding actions; though with many of these common words for the concrete the Urdu and the English word symbols are so exactly equivalent that a simple translation would also give the exact English meaning. But what about 'beautiful', 'think', 'for', 'cool', 'shiver', 'faint', or 'stumble'? No doubt the interpretation of some of these directly would add to the pupil's entertainment, but it would tax the ingenuity of the teacher and use much precious time to devise ways of conveying the meaning clearly without a lapse into the vernacular.

Further, it is precisely with expressions having shades of meaning characteristic of English that the greatest difficulties in direct interpretation occur. Imagine the teacher demonstrating directly the difference in meaning between 'tremble' and 'shiver', or 'fat' and 'thick', or 'pretty' and 'beautiful' or 'fetch' and 'bring', or 'say' and 'speak' and 'tell', all very common words with a claim, most of them, to an early place in the pupil's vocabulary.

The second fact which the rigorous direct methodists overlook is a simple fact of human nature, of pupil nature in particular. The Indian pupil when offered a 'direct' explanation of 'house' or 'chair', however carefully the teacher may keep the vernacular at a distance, will not be content till he has *uttered in thought* what he takes to be the vernacular equivalent for the new word; his

mind seeks a vernacular equivalent word to rest upon. Thus in its new disguise he will discern with satisfaction an old friend. And no amount of disapproval on the part of the teacher or pretence at avoidance on that of the pupil will prevent the pupil obeying this law of his nature; in obeying which, be it also noted, he is reinforcing his memory for the foreign words, by associating them with vernacular words which he is using frequently in his ordinary discourse. The position may be summarized by saying that the direct method in all its rigour mistakes the end for the means, the goal for the path that leads to it. The direct association of every English word or expression with its full significance—its meaning, shades of meaning, and emotional atmosphere—is certainly the eventual objective of language study; and the student's success in making those associations is a test of his mastery of the language. But, as we have just seen, the end is not to be attained by expecting the pupil to make that association at the outset. *The direct method is a short cut to nowhere.* The full significance of a word in any language can only come to the student slowly, as with experience and observation of its use in varying contexts, and in various styles of speech or writing, the possibilities and limitations of the word gradually make themselves felt. There is no way of shortening this process. It is the only 'natural' method of acquiring a language, and must be pursued in learning a foreign language, as it is pursued by every child in learning his mother tongue.

#### *Reasons for avoiding the Vernacular*

For the reasons given the reader will understand that the claim of this method of interpreting meanings to be both a direct and a natural method is not justified. It is neither direct nor, in an ordinary sense, is it natural. For all that, we must not rush to the conclusion that there is nothing to be said in favour of its employment on occasion, indeed on very many occasions. The point to bear in mind here is that the pupil is concerned in learning English, and that *any unnecessary introduction of the vernacular into the English lesson is so much taken from the hearing or speaking of English and diverted to the*

*vernacular.* The more the lesson in English is a lesson in English and not in a vernacular, the quicker will be the pupil's progress. The old translation method of interpreting (and re-interpreting) the foreign words erred by introducing the vernacular unnecessarily ; often there was more vernacular than English in the English lesson. Part of time the pupil was scarcely learning English at all. In a word, *the more English you can get into a lesson in English without sacrificing intelligibility the better.*

There is a special psychological factor of importance also. The more English the atmosphere of the lesson the more readily the pupil enters an English universe of thought. We all know the story of the pupil who, when asked during an Arithmetic lesson where Rome was situated, was unable to reply, but when he was told it was a question in Geography gave the right answer without hesitation. This is an extreme illustration of the fact that the mind adjusts its ideas to the universe in which it is working, and if it is working in one universe of ideas, finds it difficult to collect ideas from another. We may go further than this, and add that the more the mind persists in a given universe (and the less the attention is diverted to another) the more readily and abundantly do ideas from within that universe flock to the mind. Witness the familiar process of warming to one's work. If this be so, the pupil in the English lesson, when it is practice in English that is being undertaken, should dwell as much as practicable in the universe of English, and not in the two universes of English and the vernacular, when both languages will be competing for his attention.

Many 'direct method' advocates rightly lay stress on the importance of inducing the pupil to think in English as soon and as much as possible. Thinking in English, whether the pupil utters what he thinks or not, is true economy of teaching energy, in that the pupil, apart from the presence or immediate direction of the teacher, is engaged in silently practising and so impressing the English he has learnt. This 'accelerates his language progress. Indeed, *it is not till we think in a language that we really begin to go rapidly ahead.* Now this thinking in English begins the sooner and becomes

the more frequent, the more complete a universe of English into which the pupil is admitted in the English lesson. And this is the really important fact underlying the direct methodist's practice of avoiding all unnecessary vernacular in the English lesson:

In reference to the interpretation of new words, the question remains to be answered 'How do we know when the vernacular is unnecessary?' We may give the answer at once. *In the interests of teaching economy the teacher should use all the English he can without wasting time or leaving the pupil in perplexity. Rather than run either risk he should resort to the vernacular.*

An illustration or two will make this rule clear. For the teacher to attempt by indirect 'direct' methods to give the meanings of 'shiver' and 'tremble' would almost certainly take much time and end in confusing the pupil. To give the vernacular equivalents and add in the vernacular as well the explanation that tremble is used as the expression of fear and shiver of physical causes like cold, is to give a more definite idea of their uses in half the time. The same is the case with such simple words as 'seat', 'stool', 'chair'—explanation in the vernacular will save much ingenuity or paraphernalia for making clear the differences between them. Should an actual stool not be handy, and the teacher explain the word chair by pointing to a chair in the room, the chances are that the next time the pupil sees a 'stool' he will call it in English a chair. Thus the direct method fails to prevent this confusion—which explanation in the vernacular would easily forestall.

#### *Devices for avoiding the Vernacular*

Subject to the provisos given in our rule, there are four ways in which the teacher can avoid introducing the vernacular in explaining new words<sup>1</sup> in English—

(a) By direct association with an action, gesture, or object (walk, smile, point, book).

<sup>1</sup> To avoid reiteration of the phrase 'words and expressions', it should be understood in future that 'words' also includes word-combinations used so commonly in a single meaning as to constitute a single word for purposes of language study and practice.

(b) By association with a representation of the same in a picture.

(c) By inference from the context (e.g., 'There are —months in the—).

(d) By explanation in English words already familiar.

Of these four ways the first two predominate at the beginning, and the last two become the regular means of explanation as the pupil's vocabulary expands, ordinarily after the first two years of the course.

The controversy that has long existed over the 'direct' method has done a disservice to language teaching by drawing attention from what is of more to what is of less importance in teaching procedure. The really important thing as regards interpretation, for example, is not that the teacher shall use or avoid the vernacular in making a meaning clear in the first instance, but that once the pupil has secured the meaning, the use of the vernacular in connection with it shall cease, except as a convenient means of testing the retention of that meaning in the memory.

And as regards the pupil's progress in language, which is, after all, the only thing that matters, the use or non-use of the vernacular for first explanation makes much less difference than the efficiency or non-efficiency of the measures adopted in practising the new English, as it is learnt, up to the point of automatic use afterwards; and particularly in practising it orally. For this reason it would be much more helpful to a teacher, as indicating the feature that should pervade his teaching, to call the most serviceable method a *practice* or an *oral method* rather than a *direct method*, a term that, after all, is in India usually only applied to a minor item in the process of teaching.

## CHAPTER V

### PROCEDURE IN THE EARLY STAGE

WE are now in a position to set before the teacher a suggestive type of lesson procedure for the early stage embodying the principles laid down in previous chapters. The reader must bring to his consideration of this lesson type two cautions: one, that in no case does it indicate an invariable lesson framework into which each lesson, irrespective of time or difficulty, is to be fitted as a single whole; the second, that so long as the main principles of the teaching are observed a good deal of variety in procedure is to be encouraged, lest the teacher fall too easily into a routine and the pupil into boredom.

#### *No fixed Lesson Form*

As regards these cautions it is as well to impress, especially upon the trained teacher, that too much stress may easily be laid on each lesson, in its period in the time-table, forming a complete lesson unit. So long as each fresh step in the teaching is really taken by the pupils, so long, in other words, as the lesson is really taught and driven home, and thus makes its substantial contribution to the pupil's progress, the question whether a particular fixed programme or succession of lesson steps, answering to the teacher's idea of an ordinary lesson, is or is not taken completely and in order, and that within the period for the purpose, is of minor significance. As a kind of support for the inexperienced teacher to begin or fall back upon, the fixed lesson framework has its value, but, as soon as ever he is familiar with it and has fathomed the principles upon which it is built up, any teacher worth his salt will at once begin applying the same principles in different ways, and putting to the trial other promising expedients and devices.

Besides this, he will always be ready to sacrifice the order or completeness of his lesson to the exigencies of the moment, to spend, for example, more time than usual on some feature of pronunciation which happens to present unusual difficulty or requires a variety of devices for overcoming it. In that case his lesson will not reach its end at all—within the period. So long as he observes connection and proportion, adaptations, abbreviations, abridgments or prolongations of procedure must be normally expected of every intelligent teacher.

#### *A Simple Procedure*

In the opening lesson of the course, then, *there are two essential elements—pronunciation or phonetic practice, and practice in speaking.* A typical lesson will make room for both, and might include steps like the following:—

(a) Drill in one or two difficult isolated sounds, the teacher first uttering the sound, in contrast with the nearest vernacular equivalent, then selecting one or two pupils separately, and then groups, and then the whole class. The letter or letters symbolizing the sound may be printed on the blackboard. It should be explained that in English the same sound does not invariably go with the same letter.

A word or two with meanings, embodying the sound, may be taught and orally repeated with a view to memorizing it.

(b) Sentence practice should be preceded by a short explanation in the vernacular of what is intended. One or two objects in the room in any very ordinary sentence context ('This is' or 'I see') may serve the purpose. The word being explained, probably 'directly', should be drilled in its sentence till the sentence is known. A question should be taught (e.g., 'What is—?', 'What do I see?') and the answer. Variety will be given to the lesson by making teacher and pupil alternately questioner and answerer.

The understanding of the sentences may be tested by calling for vernacular equivalents.

The lesson should include one or two sentences

admitting of or requiring action, and as the sentence is practised the corresponding action may be performed (e.g., as the pupil says 'There is the book' he may touch the book, or 'What do I see?' 'You see the book' pointing to or looking at the book at the same time).

(c) One or two words or word-combinations may be put on the blackboard by the teacher, taken from the sentences of the day, and the word (book, pen,) or word-combination ('This is a book') studied as a whole, not syllable by syllable or letter by letter.

For this exercise words should be preferred which exemplify one of the sounds dealt with in the special pronunciation drill, and the letter or letters corresponding to it should then be specially noticed.

Though it is convenient early in the course to accustom the pupils to the commoner sounds or powers of the letter symbols, there is no need to go out of one's way to choose words for blackboard representation for their phonic differences or resemblances too early (e.g., bat, mat, cat, may serve to elucidate the force of 'at' and of b, c, and m, only, if at all, after these words have been dealt with in the ordinary course of teaching).

(d) There is no need to trouble the pupils to write anything in the early lessons, but later on writing may begin by copying from the blackboard familiar words and letters. In following out this procedure care must be taken that the pupils *hear* the teacher correctly. He should repeat the sentences to be imitated with varying speeds, up to a normal speed of utterance. It is the normal speed that the pupil must learn, both to understand as spoken and to attain in his own speech. *Great attention should, therefore, be paid to practice in hearing from the start.*

(e) The last stage of such a lesson may leave the pupil a sentence, a word, and a sound to memorize, and repeat orally, for revision at the opening of the next day's lesson.

### *Variations*

As the lessons proceed the procedure gains in fulness and variety. The commoner pronouns, words for actions and objects, question words, should be dealt with early.



and simple presents, pasts, and imperatives. Assuming a few weeks' accumulated vocabulary, a variation on the procedure given above is illustrated in a lesson like the following :—

(a) Testing of sentences or sounds memorized.

(b) Revision of previous acquirements (e.g., the present and past tenses with 'do', 'see', and 'go') leading on to the lesson of the day.

(c) Introduction of presents and pasts of 'come' and 'get'. This can be done by—

(i) Simple verb drill in sentences, using the now familiar pronouns.

I come to the window.

You come to the window.

He comes to the window, etc.

Grammatical drill of this kind is not to be omitted simply because it appears to be mechanical. But the pupils may be stopped short now and again to give the vernacular for one of the sentences (e.g., give vernacular for 'She comes to the window').

(ii) The pupils may now make up for themselves the present tense of 'I get the chalk', first individual pupils—a better and then a worse pupil—and then the group.

(iii) The same may be done with the simple past ('I came', 'I got', etc.).

The contrast between present and past forms can be carefully pointed out, and the single instance of the final 's' (in third person singular) be noted or revised.

(The words 'third person singular' need not, of course, be introduced to trouble the pupils, as technical grammatical terms should not be taught unless they prove necessary. The terms 'past' and 'present' should, however, be known because they are not technical but common words of ordinary life.)

(iv) Question and answer practice will at once test the pupils' comprehension of the lesson, and further practise them in rapid use of present and past, and of the question forms of present and past.

(v) Some blackboard work may accompany the lesson, e.g., of one past and present sentence apiece for come (came) and get (got). This is a gradual introduction to reading, and

(vi) There may be a little transcription of a word or word-combination—the approach to writing.

In practising question or interrogative sentences the teacher may vary the objects as well as the subjects of the verbs, and pupils should be encouraged to do the same.

It will be noted that this lesson procedure has left no room for pronunciation drill, but this can have proportionately more attention in another period according to the pupils' progress. But *it is important that errors in pronunciation should be immediately corrected*, and that the teacher should not fall into an easy contentment with a bad pronunciation—an error to which in the desire to get on with the vocabulary practice he is specially liable.

The following are supplementary illustrations by way of brief lesson notes of the kind of lesson suitable in the early stage :—

### *Illustrative Procedures*

#### A

A class in its first year of English, average age eleven or twelve.

Previous lessons in pronunciation and the accumulation of a vocabulary mostly including words for objects and actions easily represented in the class-room and sentences using these.

The aim of the lesson is to teach and practise a few simple adjectives.

(a) *Introduction* : Oral revision of a few sentences learnt by heart yesterday, and of three or four learnt previously.

Questions to obtain the three or four learnt previously.

(b) Tell the class we shall learn to use a few English adjectives to-day. (*N.B.*—The word adjective can be used and given its vernacular equivalent even if the class has not yet learnt the word. Its meaning can thus be more easily taught later on as required.)

(c) *New Matter to be taught.*—Long/short. Big/small. Fat/thin. Big/little. [Note the principle of contrast.]

*Method* : Use sentences in each case bringing in verbs and nouns already known, e.g.—

‘Ram Lal is big.’ ‘Mohan Singh is small.’ Point to the two boys, utter the sentence, and have it repeated by one or two boys. Use gesture when contrasting big and small (e.g., by raising or lowering the hands).

Deal similarly with two books, two pieces of chalk, etc.

Ask the vernacular for big, small, from one or two duller boys to test the comprehension. Have simultaneous group or class repetition of the sentences.

‘Another word for small is little.’ Tell this, and have pupils make up for themselves sentences using it.

Get mistakes corrected by a fellow-pupil, and the correct form repeated two or three times by the offender. But *if you cannot get the correction quickly give it yourself.*

Deal similarly with fat and thin, long and short, following the steps—

- (1) Uttering the sentences while pointing to objects which illustrate the meaning.
- (2) Getting a few individuals to do the same.
- (3) Testing one or two through asking the vernacular.
- (4) Simultaneous repetition.
- (5) Getting individuals to frame sentences and show by pointing that they understand.

(N.B.—For ‘long’ and ‘short’ use, e.g., pencils, or bits of string, or lines on the blackboard.)

(d) 1. Ask questions (‘Is this long or short?’ ‘Is this book big?’ ‘Show me a little boy’, etc.).

2. Propose answers to which the pupils are to supply suitable questions, e.g.—

‘Give me a question to’—

‘No, it is small.’ ‘Yes, it is long.’

‘Ram Lal.’ ‘The pencil’, etc.

(e) Get pupils to join one or two sentences together, using ‘and’ and ‘but,’ and the words studied in the lesson. Words or a sentence or two (according to the pupils’ ability) to be written down from the blackboard or dictated and memorized for revision in the next lesson.

[The choice of these sentences, of course, depends on previous knowledge. It is assumed, for example, here that the use of 'Yes' and 'No' in introducing answers has been taught previously.]

B

Here is a suggestion for a lesson of a somewhat different kind, in which the vocabulary is built on a common framework:—

Some simple expressions of time with tenses corresponding, and suitable answer forms.

The days of the week have been memorized mechanically.

The day of the lesson is Tuesday.

Begin with questions:—

(1) What day is it to-day? What will it be to-morrow? What day was it——?

(Answer to questions.)

(2) Pupils to put the right questions to answers 'Tuesday,' 'Sunday,' 'Wednesday.'

(Questions to answers.)

(*N.B.*—'What day was it?' is an idiom to be specially learnt in this way.)

(3) What did you do on Monday?	} Method
What do you do on Tuesday? To-day?	
What will you do on Wednesday?	
	(1) and
	(2)

(4) Do you always come to school on Mondays?

Do you never come to school on Sundays?

Do you often come to school on Sundays?

Do you seldom come to school on —— ?

Do you sometimes come to school in the holidays?

(*N.B.*—Teach these (a) by using vernacular, (b) in comparison and contrast, e.g.,

always/never

often/seldom

and shew that 'sometimes' is half-way between. Have sentences reiterated. Be careful to find sentences that suit them in fact, e.g.—

I (always) come to school on Tuesday.

I (never) come to school on Sunday.

I (sometimes) speak English.

I (never) speak Persian.

I (often) speak Punjabi.

I am (seldom) ill.

(5) Write the same (or similar) sentences omitting 'always', 'never', etc., and getting pupils to fill in those blanks correctly.

(N.B.—The device of getting pupils to fill in blanks in sentences can be adopted orally, not only in writing or from seen blackboard examples.)

(6) Put up on the blackboard words for sentence framing by the pupils, or let pupils ask you or one another questions introducing the usage and words you have practised with them.

(7) End with a few miscellaneous questions on the matter taught, and have one or two sample sentences written down for memorizing.

[These may include question sentences, so long as the pupils continue to make mistakes in the form of the English question.]

It may, of course, be found that the teaching of the two sets of items, viz., the split verb (e.g., what *did* you *do*—) and the time expressions (always, never, etc.) cannot be effectively accomplished in a single lesson. In deciding how much he can teach in a given period, the teacher will be guided by his own experience of his pupils and of their previous knowledge.

### *Contrast with the Vernacular*

Though early lessons should rely as far as possible upon direct practice in English, without the mediation of the vernacular, it must not be forgotten that *in any case where confusion or doubt as to meaning occurs the vernacular should be used in explanation*. Besides this, where a pupil picks up a new English usage or construction with difficulty, because of his temptation to give it a vernacular form, the *teacher may deliberately dwell upon the contrast between the two languages*. Here is a sample case:—

First year of English. Age about 11.

To teach and practise the question order of words as in 'Am I going?', 'Is he walking?' etc.

- (1) Revise use of 'I am going' by making the class run through the conjugation ('I am going', 'You are going', 'He is going', etc.).
- (2) Obtain from them the vernacular for one or two of these sentences, then the vernacular sentence in question form.

Note that *there is no difference in the word order.*

- (3) Explain that there is a difference in the word order in English. Give the English questions 'Am I going?', 'Are you going?', 'Is he going?' Have them repeated by individuals, and groups.
- (4) Contrast first with the English statement forms, and get the pupil to tell you in the *vernacular* that the first *two words exchange places* in each case.
- (5) Then let pupils turn 'We are going', 'They are going', into questions for themselves.
- (6) Contrast these with the vernacular equivalents as to order of words.
- (7) Have similar practice with other familiar verbs, 'do', 'walk', 'say', etc.
- (8) Then give miscellaneous vernacular sentences first as statements, then as questions, and test the pupils individually and rapidly for the English equivalents. (Split the class into two sections for this purpose, to see which can beat the other.)

The teaching of the use of English comparatives (the term or definition can be disregarded) might similarly be done through contrast with the different vernacular usages.

#### *Sentence Types for Practice*

It is not the purpose of this book to go at length into details of procedure or to put before the teacher a suggestive syllabus or course of lessons. There are books on the market that attempt this already. A rich mine of material to which the principles advocated for the early stage of the teaching may be applied is to be found in Professor H. E. Palmer's *The Oral Method of Teaching*

*Languages* (Heffer and Sons, Cambridge, 5s. net), and in his *Substitution Tables*.<sup>1</sup> Though written chiefly with English pupils learning French or German in view, it contains a great variety of types of lesson for oral practice, many of which, though not yet familiar in India, should find a place in the teacher's programme.

A few types may be suggested here, by way of illustration. Besides practice in nouns, adjectives, verbs (of action to begin with), prepositions (of place first), and in elementary syntax, the following are of interest :—

1. Practice in rough *definitions*, e.g.—
  - Lahore's a town.
  - The Punjab is a province.
  - A coat is something we wear.
  - Bread is something we eat.
  - A teacher is someone who teaches.
  - A pupil is someone who learns lessons, etc.
2. Practice in *context groups* (in which the context suggests the meaning).—
  - (a) A Pen is used for writing.  
Chalk is used for writing on the blackboard.
  - (b) We hear with our ears.  
We see with our eyes.
  - (c) I read a book.  
I sleep on my bed.
  - (d) A box is made of wood.  
A pencil is made of wood and lead.

It is clear that other sentences could easily be formed on the same lines as (a), (b), (c) and (d) to provide matter for as many different context lessons.

3. *Short and long answers*, e.g.—
  - How old are you? Twelve. Twelve years old. I am twelve years old.
  - Is this a table or a chair? A table. It's a table. It is a table, not a chair.
4. 'Yes' and 'No' answers, e.g.—
  - Can you hear me? Yes (I can hear you).

<sup>1</sup> *Colloquial English*, Part I, 100 Substitution Tables. (Heffer and Sons, 3s. 6d.)

Can you hear the bell? No (I cannot hear the bell).

Can you not hear me? Yes (I can hear you).

Can you not hear the bell? No (I can't hear it).

Pupils should also learn to put questions to these and similar types of answer.

5. *Expanding or varying* questions or orders, e.g.—

(a) What is this?

What sort of a thing is this?

Tell me what this is, etc.

(b) Open your books.

I should like you to open your books.

Open your books, please.

6. Variants within a *common framework*, e.g.—

If I have a book, I can read.

If I have a pen, I can write.

If I have boots, I can walk.

If I have bread, I can eat.

If I have ink, I can write.

If I have money, I can buy things, etc.

7. Completions, e.g.—

(a) I am older than you, so you (are younger than I am).

Mohan is taller than Ram Lal, therefore Ram Lal.....

(b) As he has a pen, he (can write).

As I have legs, I.....

Often in such cases a sample sentence (e.g., I am bigger than you, therefore you are smaller than I) may be given first by the teacher as a guide.

These, and many other of the forms in which Mr. Palmer presents language material for practice, well deserve adoption in teaching English in India.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE MIDDLE STAGE AND THE READER

#### A.—TRANSITION TO THE MIDDLE STAGE—THE USE OF PICTURES

##### *Pictures at the Early Stage*

WE have already mentioned the special advantage of pictures for increasing the vocabulary which can be taught concretely or with the advantage of visual associations. So long as the vocabulary is confined to these ordinary class-room objects, actions, attributes or relations, which can be interpreted or practised concretely on the spot, the supplementary aid of pictures can be dispensed with. Even at this stage, however, there is no harm, and may even be some advantage, in the *occasional* reference to a picture or photograph in cases where the meaning of a common word, or rather its associations, in an English mind, differ from those which that word calls up in an Indian mind, and the differences can be interestingly indicated in this manner. The word house, for example, is a case in point, so are words like street, well, field, plaything, shop, policeman. Without departing from our principle that the choice of vocabulary should depend upon its present utility to the Indian pupil, that words should be taught because he is frequently thinking the ideas which correspond to them and can thus be using them as soon as they are taught him, it seems a pity where pictures, picture post-cards, or photographs are easily available, not to avail oneself of the child's spontaneous interest in scenes of other lands and at the same time prepare him for understanding English life and customs later. It is not, however, suggested that much time should be given to an elaborate use of pictures at this stage, though the teacher should make a point of impressing on the pupil obvious contrasts in what the word calls up to the English and the Indian mind.

*In the Intermediate Stage*

It is in the second or transitional stage between the early mainly oral stage and the middle stage that centres its teaching round the reader, that the teacher will find pictures, if suitably composed and used, of most immediate service. Some hints accordingly are required as to the kind of picture advisable and the use to which it may be put.

The best picture for regular (as distinct from occasional) class use is a large wall picture depicting common scenes of Indian, not of English, life. The commoner the things and doings which the picture portrays the better—a village well, the inside of a town house or a small cottage, a village school-room, a town street scene, village or town shops, a railway station with a train arriving, a post office, people bathing in a river, preparing the morning meal, ploughing, sowing or reaping in the field, playing in the field, playing in the school compound, and so on.

Secondly, the picture should hit a convenient mean between too much and too little detail. On the one hand, the objects it portrays should stand out sufficiently clearly to be easily visible to everyone in the class; on the other, there should be enough variety of object and movement to provide vocabulary for a series of lessons. This for reasons of financial economy. Consequently there should be clear contrasts of light and colour, and outline, while the scene should show plenty of life and movement, and provide for groupings corresponding conveniently with a division of topics for a lesson series.

Pictures fulfilling these conditions are not, as far as the writer knows, at present on the market, though at least in one province a fairly suitable series is being prepared.

*Using the Picture*

As regards use. A plan common in European classrooms is to associate the pictures with early lessons in a reader, the wall picture, a small copy of which also appears in the reader, providing a good deal of the subject-matter for several lessons. By reference to the

picture the teacher can often avoid introducing the vernacular when interpreting new words, and can illustrate the text. He can also use the picture for recapitulation or expansion of the text, that is, as a handy basis for

(a) testing the pupils' acquisition of the new vocabulary, and

(b) for expanding, or getting them to expand, the text-book narrative.

In the latter process imaginative interest may be aroused, e.g., by giving individuals portrayed in the pictures names or relationships, or by assuming some simple situation which the picture suggests and getting the pupils to work it out, e.g., that the father enters the house (before which he is standing in the picture). What does he find in the room behind the left-hand window?

But it is easy to go too far here; for the caution must be borne in mind that *in learning English not much effort in thinking out subject-matter should be demanded.*

The occasional introduction of a picture or photograph of English life can, of course, be continued at this stage, and for the same purpose as previously. Suppose an Indian (or provincial) street scene be the subject of the wall picture in use at the time, to introduce a picture of a London street and point out some of the more interesting contrasts (using the vernacular as necessary) is to accustom the pupils to the idea that words apparently synonymous may stand for somewhat different sets of ideas as used in different languages; a step towards gathering the foreign associations round the foreign word.

### *Danger of Over-use*

In using pictures as pegs for fresh, or for revision of old vocabulary<sup>1</sup> a too rigid, continuous, or prolonged adherence to pictures is found to have special dangers:—

(1) The scope of the vocabulary is apt to remain too narrow, by being limited to words capable of being

<sup>1</sup> It must be understood that by vocabulary as here used is intended not only, nor chiefly, a set of single words, but of words in sentences, and, as this becomes possible, in connected sentences. Vocabulary revision thus signifies revision by means of sentences or continuous composition, not by mere interpretation of single words.

represented in a picture. Much that is very common in ordinary language is not of this character, but still claims an early place in the pupil's vocabulary. This applies, for instance, to a great part of the vocabulary of feeling, of character, and of reflection, witness words like, 'think', 'feel', 'try', 'be sad', 'unhappily', 'cease', 'selfish', 'good', and so on. And many compound words are beyond the picture's scope. ('All the same', 'at any rate', 'in fact', etc.).

A picture is especially useful for portraying verbs of action and movement ('skip', 'run', 'smile', 'stoop', 'climb', etc.), which the teacher can scarcely be expected to represent personally before the class; and nouns and adjectives of a concrete character which cannot be readily represented in or near the class-room itself.

For this reason the picture lessons should be interspersed with others; and the use of the picture method should become more intermittent, till the ordinary reading text eventually provides the main lesson material, with the picture as an occasional illustrative adjunct.

A second danger which experience reveals is a tendency in the pupil to lean too much upon the picture for recall. There appear to be some pupils who, after constant word association with a picture, fail to remember the word unless the picture is before them. To whatever degree this actually takes place, it is in any case sound policy to practise without the picture as soon as possible any new vocabulary introduced in direct connection with it.

We shall have something more to say about pictures when dealing with the main middle stage of the teaching which centres round the reader.

To that subject we can now turn.

## •B.—THE READER AND THE MIDDLE STAGE

### *Reading Aloud First*

In the teaching of a vernacular it is becoming customary to draw a distinction in aim and method between reading aloud and reading silently, the former being taught primarily to impart the technique of reading and the power of expression, the latter for pleasure and

profit. In teaching a modern foreign language like English in India a similar distinction will eventually apply, but *in the early stage of the teaching the reading will be mostly reading aloud*, and attention will be paid more to the mechanical qualities of reading English, a correct pronunciation and articulation, and understanding of what is being read, than to the cultivation of expression or the fitting of tone, emphasis, etc., so as to convey to the hearer all that the author personally intended to convey. In other words, it is the *general* qualities of English speech and reading, not the *particular* expression of the passage, on which the teacher has to concentrate first.

*Reading with expression is an art that should be cultivated in the vernacular*, and in lessons on his mother tongue the pupil should contract that habit of fitting expression which once contracted he will bring to his reading of English later on when he has mastered the earlier difficulties of pronunciation and vocabulary. Nor can we expect profitable silent reading at an early stage in the teaching of English, until, at any rate, the pupil can make such progress in reading with understanding that his enjoyment of what he reads is no longer thwarted by its difficulties.

A further reason for an almost exclusive attention to reading aloud in the first stage of English reading is the necessity of seeking every possible aid towards good speaking of English in the beginner, and reading aloud may be regarded as speaking practice with the book to supply the words. It is, in fact, speaking without the trouble of finding the thoughts, and is thus a stage preparatory to practice in speaking with that trouble, that is, to independent oral composition.

### *The Blackboard Transition to Reading*

To this reading of English aloud the first or mainly oral stage of English leads on gradually. *The transition is effected by judicious use of the blackboard*. As already suggested, collected letters, words, and sentences, used in the oral practice, are written by the teacher on the blackboard, and seen and uttered by the pupils. If this is confined to matter already familiar in sound and meaning,

the pupil in uttering words seen on the blackboard has begun his reading already. He has, as it were, begun to learn reading almost without knowing it. And when he has made enough progress in this blackboard reading of English sentences the time has come to introduce him to a first reading book.

The passage to the printed reading book will be made the smoother if the teacher's blackboard writing is done in print; and if, in addition, he accustoms his pupils to English script writing, or as it might more accurately be called, print writing, when they begin to write English he will be saving himself and them the time ordinarily wasted in acquiring one style of lettering for purposes of reading and another for purposes of writing.

### THE ENGLISH READER

#### *Value of Phonetic Script*

Ideally, as has been said, the first reader should be in some form of phonetic symbol. India is badly in need of sets of phonetic readers, which by associating sounds and symbols with absolute regularity immensely facilitate the pupil's progress in recognizing words and greatly assist to a correct pronunciation. To the objection that by confronting the pupil with one system of symbols at the start and changing to the conventional spelling later you are only postponing the eventual difficulties, the answer is that they are being postponed to a time when the natural growth of the pupil's intelligence will make much lighter work of them, and that experience proves that the phonetic symbolization is sufficiently akin to the conventional to lessen in itself the difficulty to be overcome. *A measure urgently required in India, then, is the publication of suitable phonetic English readers.*

#### *Subject-matter of Early Readers*

As regards contents, it is as well that the early English reader lessons should confine language and matter to what has already been taught orally. Provided the reader is otherwise suitable the teacher can himself fulfil this condition by seeing that the orally learnt vocabulary covers that of the early lessons of the reader.

In this way the pupil will slip readily into reading, and if in later lessons the number of new words and usages is graduated, the first condition of steady progress is provided.

In accordance with our leading principles *the subject-matter of the readers for the first two, or even three years, is better confined to familiar Indian life*, and should on no account trespass upon distinctively English life or have English illustrations. The pupil needs to use English as a means of communication in his Indian home and his Indian school.

In language the reader should hit a mean between language that is so bald as to lose all its English flavour, and English that is so idiomatic as to present difficulties at every turn. But besides the introduction of new words, equally necessary is the introduction of new common idioms and usages drawn from colloquial English that can serve equally well in speaking and writing. In current primers and readers it is this latter element in the English tongue that is commonly overlooked, with the result that the pupil grows up unable to understand or to use himself a mass of commonplace English of the greatest use in ordinary talk and writing. And the impoverishment is quite unnecessary.

A warning should be uttered against the adoption of first readers (for some reason usually called 'primers') in which the selection of matter and language is determined by a phonic principle, so to call it, instead of by simple usefulness in the pupil's daily life.

Such, for instance, is the type of primer which begins with words all of one syllable, or relates how 'the hen ran to the van,' or 'the lad licked the lock and was sick,' and so on. The stuff must, above all, be such as the pupil would himself actually think about, the ideas must be ideas ordinarily coming into his mind, and not language and matter specially conjured up in the mind of the writer of the primer for the occasion. It is as well to enter on connected matter after the first few pages, if not indeed from the very beginning, and *in no case should the pupil be called upon to face a series of sentences disconnected in subject and connected in language only by similarities of spelling or sound*. It is time that in teaching English

reading the phonic fetish disappeared. The teacher can see to this part of the business with the help of the black-board. And where irregularities in spelling make word recognition by inspection difficult, the look-and-say method should be unhesitatingly employed. There is no particular merit in getting the pupils to 'make out' all the words as they go along in a language so irregular as English, though they may reasonably be expected to recognize words of more regular spelling without prompting, and to remember irregular words on a second or third reading of them.

From what has been said it will be rightly gathered that no sharp distinction need be drawn as regards matter, language and arrangement between the first and the later books used for intensive language teaching. *The essential features are, a selection of a suitable, useful and usable vocabulary, a gradual increase in its extent and development in usage and construction, and a sufficient continuity in the passages and variety in the topics to provide interest to the pupil and all the vocabulary needed.*

### *Vocabulary Revision*

As regards the vocabulary, care should be taken to reiterate the old when introducing the new. This, of course, is obviously inevitable, but the point is that in each successive passage there should be a deliberate bringing in again of common usages and idioms that the pupil may unconsciously revise them while they are still fresh in his memory. Unless this is done deliberately an expression may not repeat itself for so long that it has lapsed from mind when it occurs again. A well-written reader bears this principle in mind. '*Revise while you still remember, not because you have forgotten,*' is the maxim to go by.

### *Variety of Topic*

As regards continuity and variety, *the reader for intensive study should never be a continuous reader*, that is, a book on a single topic all through. What is required is a series of short chapters or passages, covering a varied range of useful matter, but each long enough to have an interest of its own and to collect a small vocabulary



round that interest. The same topic may sometimes continue for two or more lessons so long as vocabulary proportion is maintained, but the length of the single passage must be adjusted to vocabulary requirements. The book must keep building in language and phraseology on its own past. It must add new expression to new expression and repeat the old till the pupil is sure of retaining it. Repetition in varying contexts is the only way to confirm in a pupil's mind both the meaning and the use of the language he acquires, and is a step towards that automatic and spontaneous right use of language that is the goal of the teaching.

Three other questions of moment in regard to the intensively used reader of the middle stage concern the introduction of distinctively English matter, the use of pictures or other illustrations, and the introduction of verse or poetry.

### *Transition to English Topics*

It would, of course, be inadvisable to prescribe a precise moment when topics drawn from English life should first enter the reader and the language lesson. The occasional use of pictures in this connection has already been suggested for the early stage of the teaching. When the pupil is sufficiently at home with his domestic and school-room vocabulary, the time to admit English topics to the intensive reader has come. But the transition to a strange environment should not be sudden. In addition to what has been gathered of English scenes or customs from the past use of illustrations, care may also be taken to *prepare the way to English tales, anecdotes, or life situations, by a deliberate description or explanation of manners and customs which will appear in these tales, etc., incidentally.* A Christmas story, for example, will be read with misunderstanding and a sense of strangeness unless it has been preceded by a deliberate explanation of Christmas and its customs and ordinary environment. The same applies to such topics as a sea voyage, a village fair, a middle-class family gathering, or a market day in town. This preparatory explanation as part of the matter of the reader is required the more in that the Indian teacher

of English at the school stage is himself usually ignorant of English customs and has seldom been outside his own country or even his own province. The adoption of this expedient has also an obvious bearing on the pupil's introduction to supplementary reading of books written for English readers by English authors, and on his power, as his development admits, to appreciate good English literature. The intensive 'reader', that is to say, should be so composed and used as to prepare the way to that wider (and silent) reading which pupils should be able to undertake with enjoyment while still at school.

### *The Explanatory Illustration*

The same consideration governs the use of pictures and illustrations in the reader. It is their business to be explanatory of the text. For this reason *as English life finds its way into the reader, it is pictures and illustrations of corresponding scenes and objects—rather than of Indian—that will ordinarily be required.* An English park with its mansion, an English village with its public house, church and green, an English hedged field, an English seaside scene with children playing on the sands, its boating and bathing, an English city street with its traffic, its cars or trams, these are examples of the kind of illustration that is wanted when passages come into the text dealing with any of these aspects of common life in England. And in every case the teacher—and the text also—should be constantly referring the pupil to this or that detail in the picture, the matter and the illustration should illuminate one another.

### *Verse in Readers*

Lastly as to the use of verse in readers. Two functions of verse in English readers should be kept widely separate. Mere verse, which may be only doggerel, is a serviceable form of mnemonic in the early stages of progress. It can be used for embodying in easily memorable form illustrations, in sample sentences, of constructions, expressions or usages less easily committed to memory in prose. For this purpose the lines for memorizing must, of course, be few; the amount of

matter irrelevant to the expression in point must be kept at a minimum. Often the sample can be better fixed in the mind in the form of a well-known maxim or proverb — 'the more the merrier', for example, illustrating a special use of 'the', or 'it is never too late to mend', the use of 'too' with the gerundial infinitive.

More important than this special use of rhymed verse is a right judgment in the selection of poetry. The current practice of compilers of readers is to intersperse poems of more or less literary merit amongst the prose passages in all readers, even from the first primer; and of boards prescribing for the matriculation or high school final examination to include a select list of poems for study in preparation for that examination.

In anticipation of a more detailed discussion of the teaching of English literature at the school stage, it may be premised here that the number of English poems that can usefully find a place in 'readers' at the school stage is very small. For two conditions have to be fulfilled—

1. The matter must be intelligible to a child of the age, and life experience concerned, and that a life experience confined to his province in India.

2. The language must not be at variance with, nor complicate in any way, the language he is learning through his prose passages for ordinary use in his own speech and writing.

The first condition it is the more necessary to observe since the teacher himself is usually strange to English life.

Few English poems can be found fulfilling these conditions, and it is wiser to omit English poetry altogether from the course than to insert in it poems which do not fulfil them.

Where a poem is introduced a preceding passage in prose may help towards setting the atmosphere and getting over preliminary difficulties of matter or language. *For the poem must be read to be enjoyed, or not at all.*

#### THE TEACHING WITH THE READER AS CENTRE

The recommendations just given as regards the character of the reader for intensive study apply, of

course, equally to the use that should be made of it.

Where a suitable reader is in use, these will be easy to follow. But where the reader ignores any of these conditions, this does not justify a teacher in following suit. He is not, for example, obliged to teach his class a poem which neither he nor they enjoy or understand, nor need he take with his class passages in the early readers which in language or matter are foreign to Indian life. It is his business to pick and choose with judgment and never to be the slave of his book. A good reader is invaluable, and even a bad one may be a serviceable instrument if rightly used.

The question of the use to which the reader should be put, and the exercises for which it should be a basis have now to be considered.

Two principles should now be recalled ; one, that in the middle stage the various branches of language teaching should centre round the reading matter ; the other, that there is a normal order or succession in the main types of exercise upon the text.

### *The Sequence of Teaching*

As a general rule, *text study, oral practice on the text, written exercises, constitute three successive steps* of procedure, or more succinctly—reading, speaking, writing.

The purpose of the reader is to supply the new vocabulary, and in so doing, if the reader is wisely graduated, it saves the teacher most of the trouble which he would have to take if he began with oral composition. Besides this, with the reader before him the pupil can form the triple association of ear, voice and sight, instead of only the single association of voice and ear. And he can return to the reading matter for reference with none of the effort of memory which he has to make in oral practice.

The process of reading, and of learning to read, is thus at the same time a process facilitating oral and written exercises. *Once the pupil takes to the book, it would obviously waste time and energy to have oral*

*or written exercises first and book matter afterwards.* The distinction between reading and speaking, however, must not be drawn too widely. The first stage in the lesson, or unit of teaching (for the three steps need not exactly correspond to a single lesson for a single lesson period), includes some oral work with the reading. And ear training is incidental or introductory.

A common plan in teaching a modern foreign language in Western Europe, for example, is to select from the text a passage of convenient length, a sentence or two with the less advanced, or a complete paragraph with a more advanced class, to be read aloud clearly first by the teacher, the pupils listening in order to follow his meaning. The purpose of this step is to clear away preliminary difficulties of meaning—to explain words or expressions that are new or, as may happen from lapse of memory or in a fresh context, misunderstood. This explanation is purely preliminary, and the teacher does not stop at this stage to elaborate. An alternative method, favoured by many teachers in India, is to explain new words in isolation before attacking the passage itself. The objection to this is that words are less easily explicable alone than in a context, where the pupil has often the chance and interest of guessing (or rather inferring) the meaning, that in practical life words appear in sentences and not in isolation, and that the isolation method is found in practice to waste time.

The preliminary going over of the passage with sufficient explanation of the meanings has the further advantage of directing the pupils' pronunciation, and recalling familiar language, almost unconsciously, and of exemplifying the new words as sounded in sentences (i.e., as used) not as sounded when separated by themselves. The passage thus made intelligible, it is now read for pronunciation. Whether the teacher should again read first, and the number of sentences to be taken at a time, depends upon the progress already made by the class. Individual and some simultaneous repetition will come in here. If mispronunciations are few or slight, they can be dealt with as they occur, or rather, to avoid flustering the reader, at the conclusion of his sentence or passage.

*Mispronunciations*

If mispronunciations abound, either that is because a worse instead of a better pupil has been put on to read the passage first (an error in the teacher's technique) or it is a sign that the pupils' pronunciation has been neglected, and of the consequent need for separate special exercises to remedy this.

Ruthless correction of *every* mispronunciation in the course of a reading lesson is not to be recommended, if this is going to mean interruptions all the time. If the teacher finds his class backward or uneven in pronunciation, he should divert periods usually otherwise occupied to the treatment of selected difficulties.

At the same time it is a mistake to hurry over a passage in the endeavour to get so much covered in a certain time, inspectors and headmasters notwithstanding. The question at issue is not whether the pupils have nominally finished their course, but whether they have made satisfactory progress in using and understanding English. As the pupil advances, the longer the passage he should be able to read consecutively with understanding and a passable pronunciation.

*Working upon the Vocabulary*

We now enter upon our second main step in the teaching unit—oral practice.

The new words or expressions have to be worked into sentences. The pupils have to practise their use. Various devices are of service here :

(a) Direct questions on the text just read, where the pupil has merely to recall the sentences.

(b) Calling for synonyms, antonyms, or—a more difficult exercise—an illustration or explanation of a word or meaning in English, or of the difference in meaning between it and some familiar word.

(c) Getting the pupils to put questions to the teacher's answers, the question to bring in one of a list of words, or their synonyms put on the blackboard.

(d) Getting the pupils to fill in blanks in a blackboard passage (prepared on the spot or beforehand) with suitable expressions from a given list or otherwise.

(e) Getting the pupils to group words by form or sense, e.g., to suggest other words belonging to a given topic, or other parts of speech of the same root and root-meaning as the word in question.

Not all these exercises will be undertaken every time ; and other exercises than these may suggest themselves to a resourceful teacher.

In selecting which expressions he is going to practise the teacher must decide according to their utility and the existing state of his pupils' vocabulary. Not all new words can be worked up in this way with each new lesson. *A readily serviceable vocabulary, even if small, is the thing to aim at.*

At this point in his procedure, or later, one or two sample sentences may be written down for memorizing.

### *Supplementary Exercises*

Besides new word practice which serves also as practice in conversation, practice is also required in continuous speaking. *Exercises in continuous speaking come in appropriately at this stage of the lesson.* They may, of course, also be postponed till another period, with the advantage of giving pupils time to make up and rehearse what they are going to say.

Here again devices are various, e.g.—

(a) Simple reproduction of the passage in the pupil's words.

This may be assisted by putting questions, or headings, or mere 'key' words, on the blackboard, to assist him in recalling the matter of the passage. This is in accord with the principle that in teaching a modern foreign language the pupil should be enabled to concentrate on the language without diverting his efforts to the matter. But, of course, not more should appear on the blackboard than serves this purpose—a series of single words may suffice. *The temptation of many, especially of trained teachers, to overload the blackboard must be resisted.*

(b) Setting the pupils a number of words or phrases of a kind and sequence suggesting the development of a given topic, which they can then weave together in a connected speech.

The following example will speak for itself :—

'...accident.....the child's clothes.....caught fire  
.....cried and.....hospital.....visited  
him daily.....kind treatment..... All's well that  
ends well.'

This, it will be seen, is similar in kind to the exercises just suggested, but it has the advantage of being very easily graduated by varying the number of the blanks and the amount of matter to be filled in and by being so framed as to demand a greater or less degree of rearrangement of familiar matter in the child's mind.

(c) Modified reproduction of the passage, e.g., changing pasts into presents, replacing adjectives with synonyms, adding appropriate adverbs, interpolating fresh clause, etc.

This can be done with or without the printed page before the pupil. It is the teacher's business to graduate the difficulty of the exercises.

(d) Making up a speech on a cognate subject, e.g., if the passage is one describing a storm, the pupil can describe an actual storm which he has witnessed.

This gives an opportunity of using the words and expressions of the book in slightly altered contexts, and in talk of the kind which the pupil would actually of himself engage in. Here it is the teacher's business to select 'natural' situations, that is, situations within the pupil's experience or imaginative range.

Often an interval may be allowed between the text study and the oral composition, so as to give the pupil time to think his speech out. Also, a list of words or phrases may be set him to bring into his speech.

(e) Reproducing a story from the point of view of someone other than the person assumed to be telling it in the book; e.g., in a story of a quarrel between two village lads, related by a third person, the story can be retold in the person of one or other of the chief actors.

This type of oral work has obvious scope for entertainment.

(f) Varying the episodes in a story, inventing a fresh ending, inserting a fresh incident, etc.

This may prove a difficult exercise for pupils in the middle stage, and should be undertaken only as they find



## 70 THE MIDDLE STAGE AND THE READER

interest in it, and the effort of thinking out the matter is not excessive. It is a type of exercise perhaps better postponed unless the way has been prepared, as it should have been prepared, by similar exercises during the teaching of the vernacular.

In conducting these exercises in continuous speech the actual matter which the pupil chooses for his composition is of less importance than the language in which he clothes it. It is waste of time, for instance, to be constantly checking the accuracy of the narrative instead of attending to that of the language. But in setting continuous composition exercises at this stage the pupil should not have complete freedom of choice in his language, for the purpose of the exercise is not only to test his power of using what is most familiar, but to habituate him to fresh words and usages as he goes along. With complete freedom of choice the pupil will take the line of least effort, that is, he will keep resorting to the language he knows best instead of making trial of expressions of which he is still uncertain. *Hence the need of exercises which tie him down to a very definite topic or to the use of fixed words and phrases.*

### *Securing Individual Practice*

In conducting oral exercises with large classes the difficulty is to secure a satisfactory amount of individual practice. To some extent, no doubt, pupils who are not themselves speaking are still affected by listening to what is said by others. They tend to utter themselves what they hear spoken. But, firstly, listening to others is not so effectual for the purpose as practising speaking oneself, and secondly the language used by other pupils may be—and is sure to be more or less—inaccurate.

As regards the amount of individual practice, some economy may be secured by dividing the class into groups for the purpose, one doing written work, or memorizing illustrative sentences or passages, while the teacher is taking the other. To the objection that the group doing silent work will be distracted by the noise of the teaching the answer is that children are far more adaptable in this matter than many adults are, that the habit of mental application in disregard of a reasonable

amount of noise is itself a valuable educational acquirement, and that as a matter of fact experiments conducted to test the effect on efficiency of children's work of distraction by noise reveal no deterioration in quality under the distraction.<sup>1</sup> Adults who find themselves unable to work with a noise going on round them might have done well to have preserved this blessed capacity of childhood—a capacity which need not be lost if its cultivation is continued.

### *Forestalling Errors in Speech*

As regards the second difficulty of oral practice in class, namely, the risk of the pupils' contamination by the bad examples of their fellows; here again, though the risk cannot be removed, it may be reduced. To begin with, the previous preparation by study of the book passage, and the practice of single sentences, does something to forestall errors, especially if group and simultaneous supplement individual repetition. Careful adjustment of the difficulty of the exercise to the stage reached by the class is another help. So too is memorizing illustrative usages and passages beforehand, an occupation suggested for the group of silent workers mentioned above. There is, however, no ready solution of the problem; and the teacher has always to be hitting the mean between the tedium and monotony of too much drill and a superabundance of inaccuracies resulting from too little. What he has to remember is that the continuous oral exercise is an exercise with the object of teaching the *correct* use of language. If, then, inaccuracies abound, he must at once seek a remedy. It may be that the exercise is too difficult, or too long, or he has chosen one of the worst pupils to render it first, or the preparatory exercises have been inadequate. He may do wisely, for example, to spend time intended for continuous speech practice in selecting for special treatment serious mistakes made by the first two speakers, which he has reason to think are mistakes

<sup>1</sup> Vide *The Psychology of Industry*, by J. Drever, p. 98 (Methuen, 5s.)

common in the class. One warning he must take to heart, and that is that *on no account must pupils be allowed to accept serious inaccuracies as accuracies*, and so to adopt them in good faith as speech habits of their own. This is simply putting back the hands of the clock. And it is to avoid this that *continuous oral speech should always be based on what is already familiar or has just been carefully taught*, and free speech (that is speech independent of prepared matter) should be regarded as the goal to be reached in the high stage, and not as a means of reaching it.

### *Place of Written Exercise*

The third of the three main steps in the teaching process with the reader as centre, is practice in written exercises. Here the teacher has an outward and visible test of the success of his teaching—the written exercise answers for him the question how far the new language acquirements have been driven home. For this purpose *the written follow and are based on the oral and the reading exercises*. This plan too saves the pupil from the labour of evoking fresh matter: he can concentrate on language. On the same principles that govern the choice of oral exercises, the exercises chosen for writing English must be carefully graduated. The pupil in acquiring English in the high school has to pass gradually from a stage in which his writing exercise is entirely ‘chained’ (a term coined by a well-known teacher of modern languages)<sup>1</sup> to a stage when he can write English freely for the ordinary purposes of communication.

### *Types of Written Exercise*

(a) The extreme of ‘chained’ exercise is simple transcription, an exercise useful not only for practice in handwriting, but for familiarizing beginners (and older pupils) with serviceable English usages. For this purpose it is better confined to single sentences and quite short passages, the selection being made on the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. M. O’Grady in his *Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages*. (Constable.)

basis of the utility to the pupil of the usage, construction, or word-combination to be impressed on the mind by this means. Sentences for memorizing may be first transcribed. As a special exercise transcription ceases when, but not before, the pupil can transcribe accurately.

It is also a useful test of the development of the power, or rather the habit, in the pupil of attentive observation of what he sees in print. The number of errors that even older pupils often commit in transcribing is remarkable; and the transcription exercise is often abandoned too early in the English course. On the other hand, it is mainly office clerks who will eventually be expected to transcribe frequently, and accuracy increases with the general growth of habits and ideals of care in all one's undertakings. *As an occasional exercise transcription may well persist into the high classes,* and be set regularly to careless pupils, as a means of inculcating care in the use of language and impressing on them the lesson that every word and stop in written language has its value. Another reason for this continued practice is carelessness of incidental transcription in English done in their notebooks by pupils who learn English, and other subjects through the English medium. Often this incidental notebook transcription is careless and inaccurate. It is the business of the teacher of English to do his share in remedying this; though it is equally important that the teachers of the other subjects should also do theirs. The headmaster's supervision should come in here.

(b) Modified transcription is the rewriting of what is read with alterations deliberately introduced for a purpose; such as a changing of numbers or tenses or expanding sentences by inserting adjectives, etc. In its simpler form it is suitable for beginners, testing the pupils' progress in vocabulary and grammatical usage in an easy way. In its more elaborate forms (e.g., conversion of direct into indirect speech, etc.), the transcription aspect of the exercise is subordinated to its character as an exercise in grammatical usage, and as such it finds a place with older pupils.

*Special use of Dictation*

(c) Dictation is more difficult than transcription in that the sentences are written from memory of the words, not from immediate sight of them. In teaching English as a vernacular this exercise, once popular, has fallen from its pride of place, though Mr. Tomkinson, in the book cited below,<sup>1</sup> would reinstate it in a new form as a help towards appreciation of literature.

In teaching a modern foreign language the dictation, or rather the *writing from dictation of selected sentences* has a special value, as a convenient test of a pupil's progress in hearing the spoken language aright. Its use in testing spelling and handwriting at a normal speed is incidental: there are other better methods of testing these. For the purpose of testing the pupil's power of accurately hearing what is said, the passage should be uttered at ordinary speaking speed, giving the pupil time to write it down afterwards. A little experience with this kind of exercise will quickly reveal the bad hearers, who should then be separated for special hearing exercises—mimicking the teacher's sentences with varying speeds till they grow accustomed to the sounds of words in rapid combination. Even college students in India fail in hearing aright English uttered with ordinary speed and intonation. There is the more need for exercises of this character all the way up the school.

(d) Dictation may be modified as an occasional exercise which combines the test of hearing with that of progress in grammatical or other usage. In this case, however, it is the second function that is uppermost—the teacher utters a sentence in one form, the pupils write it down in an altered form in the use of which they have been previously drilled. Of course this can be done more rapidly with single pupils as a simple oral exercise, but the written exercise is a quicker method of testing a whole class, and if the passages are short and well selected the results can be rapidly checked by walking round the class.

<sup>1</sup> Vide *The Teaching of English*, by W. Tomkinson, pp. 162 sqq. (Clarendon Press).

Amongst exercises of this class should be included the dictating of answers to which the pupils are to write down suitable questions, an exercise particularly important in India where the vernacular and English word order in questions differs.

*Dictation, as a test of hearing, should continue throughout the school course.* The plan may be tried of varying the teachers who are to give it.

### *The Progress to Free Composition*

(e) A further step towards free composition is taken when the pupil writes down a series of answers to a series of blackboard questions, based on the matter read. Later he should write them down in connection, as a continuous answer. The time for doing this depends on the progress made in oral connected discourse, that is, in the use of clauses, and various kinds of connective words.

(f) Later on simple headings may be substituted for specific questions, or, as in the oral practice, single 'key words'.

At this point it is in place to insist on a difference in aim in teaching composition through a vernacular and in a modern foreign language. *Through the vernacular the pupil should acquire the art of composition ; in English he is concerned with its practice.* In other words, it is in lessons in the vernacular that he should learn how to think effectively about a subject, and how to handle words effectively for conveying his thoughts to others. For this reason he must be brought to appreciate the importance of arrangement or order, as by contrasting examples of orderly and muddled writing. And for this purpose topics should be chosen from the ordinary contents of his mind, or from ideas that he may easily be interested in arousing there, ideas within the range of his actual experience or ready imagination. This condition fulfilled, there will be no need to set before the pupil a stereotyped set of headings, or a ready-made framework, as is commonly done, for him to fit his ideas into afterwards. Indeed there is harm in so doing. For what is required of the adult is the habit of ordering *his own ideas for himself*, not of confining both his ideas

and their order within limits prescribed for them by others. Where the pupil has plenty of thoughts to express, it is perfectly possible for him, with a little encouragement and guidance, to set about doing this for himself. To prevent his doing so by prescribing headings for various types of topic is not to teach him the art of *composition* at all; it is to hinder his acquiring it.

Consequently in teaching the vernacular it is the function of the teacher to deal specifically with such subjects as the use and place of chapter, paragraph, sentence and word in the verbal communication of ideas; and to set special exercises to enable the pupil to realize the difference between the good and the bad use of these, and to acquire good habits by practice. But in helping the pupil to acquire a foreign language, since it is the accumulation and ready use of a new vocabulary that is our dominant aim, to divert energy to teaching the art of composition would be false economy—the pupil should come to his lesson in English already sufficiently trained in the general principles of expression in his vernacular. Nor should we waste over management of matter time which can ill be spared from practice in newly acquired language. *It is for this reason that in teaching English the setting of blackboard headings and of frameworks for composition may continue, even when in teaching a vernacular they are out of place.* In teaching English the teacher has in mind a certain vocabulary that he wishes to have practised; headings at the pupil's will might escape this vocabulary; the direction of the discourse must be with the teacher. At the same time, if the high school pupil is to leave the top class able to use English *freely*, he must learn to dispense with the teacher's support in preparing to speak or write before his high school course ends: the transition from the middle to the high stage of English coincides with the pupil's progress towards this freedom. Other forms of composition with this object in view will be suggested in discussing the characteristics of the high stage.

#### *Summary of Procedure*

To sum up the middle stage procedure. The typical lesson unit takes the reading text as centre. A passage

of suitable length is explained, and then read with good pronunciation (the art of expressive reading being relegated to the teaching of the vernacular). Then follows practice with the new vocabulary—working new words into sentences, examining more carefully their use and meaning, and helping the pupil to find his way about them. The pupil is now ready for practice in continuous oral expression, the length of the speech and the amount of guidance given being adjusted to the actual standard of the class, and care being taken to let no serious errors pass unwittingly into general speech habits.

From all this preceding study, matter for written exercises will be available in the pupils' minds, the teacher again adapting the exercise to the pupils' ability and to special vocabulary requirements. The reader will notice that I have called this programme a lesson unit, not a lesson.

He will rightly conclude that not all the steps in the programme will be comprised within a lesson period of forty or forty-five minutes, that the procedure here outlined as typical is not to be treated as invariable—it illustrates principles, but is not the only possible illustration of them. The written exercises will not all be done in class. And the continuous oral composition can often form a separate lesson, or come first, as a method of revision, in a period in which a new lesson follows. Rigid adherence to one formula for every lesson shows an indolent or mechanical mind, which does not adapt itself to the varying needs of the pupil in order to proportion his progress or allow for the varying difficulty of advance. *The teacher (and the inspecting officer or headmaster) will measure success by the pupil's increasing mastery of English, not by the formal perfection of a lesson according to conventional rules, nor the number of text-book pages recorded or covered in the time.*

In concluding this chapter it may be useful to warn teachers against the common error, especially of teachers of languages, of doing most of the talking themselves, and leaving little for their pupils. The teacher's temptation is to be always explaining, or setting linguistic examples, or writing at length on the



blackboard without seeing that the pupils watch what is written or use it afterwards. In a language lesson the pupils must be learning language all the time, getting used, that is, to employing it—rightly, by themselves. Explanatory ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ must be reduced to a minimum, blackboard space and writing must be carefully conserved and every device be judged by its bearing upon the prime object of the teaching.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

IN teaching English grammar three mistakes are common in our schools :—

(1) Too sharp a distinction is kept between grammar and other linguistic usage.

(2) Though much is taught that is superfluous, a good deal that is useful is left out.

(3) Too little use is made of the pupil's previous knowledge or ignorance of vernacular grammar.

It is quite common for teachers and time-tables to set aside periods for the separate teaching of grammar, and to devote these to instructing the pupil in certain laws (or habits) of the language as expounded in a grammar text-book. Time is set apart, for instance, for taking the pupil through the English parts of speech by lessons on an inductive method leading up to a definition ; for discovering rules about singulars and plurals ; distinguishing different classes of adverb or adjective ; formulating rules of syntax ; parsing ' catchy ' words in a sentence ; analysing sentences into their grammatical elements, and so on.

#### *The Place of Grammar*

A great deal of the time devoted to this kind of stuff is worse than wasted, as far as our main object, the pupil's practical mastery of the language, is concerned. For it may actually result in making deliberate and conscious in his mind speech habits that come spontaneously and unhesitatingly so long as they are unconscious, but are troubled by mental questionings as soon as they are made deliberate. No useful purpose is served by teaching the pupil rules about the formation of tenses, for example, or the agreement of a verb in number and person with its subject, if the pupil can slip into the right uses by practice without having the rule to refer to.

On the contrary, to impress on him the rule may very well lead him to be constantly referring to it to decide whether his usage is right or wrong, and thus lead to hesitation or diffidence in speaking.

The teacher is too apt to teach facts of grammar because they are grammar, and happen to be parts of a whole body of matter that goes by the name of grammar as usually put before him in a grammar book.

In actual practice nothing is gained by treating grammatical usages and rules separately from others, if indeed such a distinction can be logically established at all. Neither teacher nor pupil need bother his head about the definition or scope of grammar as such, or whether the rule the teacher is impressing (not necessarily teaching) is a rule of grammar or not. The sole questions of importance are whether it is a habit of the language and, if so, a habit that deserves specially inculcating. If the answer is 'Yes', then it is his business to implant the habit by the best means at his disposal. If, for example, his pupils split their infinitives, they must form the habit of keeping their infinitives intact; if they fall into wrong habits of tense sequence, they must change these for the right ones. If they are found saying 'It is him' or 'Who was it given to?' when the English standard usage is 'he' and 'whom' respectively, it is up to the teacher to establish the normal usage, whether he likes to include it as 'grammar' or not.

In other words, *the ground of selection for teaching is utility to the pupil learning English, not the claim of the thing taught to belong or not belong to a rather vague system called grammar.*

The reader will now understand the reason why in the previous chapter the typical procedure in teaching language from the reading text made no mention of grammar. The omission does not imply that grammatical instruction is unimportant, but that what is unimportant is the separate teaching of grammar as such, and that all the grammar that is found necessary should take its place along with any other usages or speech habits and be taught with them as the need arises. In this way a great deal of grammar will be practised along with the

word or usage practice in the oral stage of the typical procedure, and its acquisition will be tested and impressed in the written exercises that follow it.

*Superfluous Grammar*

This takes us to a second point: that *much of the grammar now usually taught is entirely superfluous*. It should not come into the course at all, because it has no practical value. To teach it is to encumber the mind with inert ideas, and thus to defy the cardinal principle of all choice of teaching matter, that it must do some work in the mind and life of the pupil taught. Examples of this grammatical lumber are sub-classes of nouns, e.g., abstract and concrete, singular and plural, proper and common. Of these classes the only one worth considering at all is the proper noun, because in writing English proper nouns begin with a capital. The term 'proper' and its associated rule may be taught accordingly when the pupil comes to use proper nouns in writing. Similarly with distinctions between pronouns, personal, demonstrative, indefinite and so on. The knowledge of these names for different classes of pronouns is associated with no habits of speech or writing that require a knowledge of a special terminology for impressing them, if indeed they have any such associations at all. None occur to the mind of the present writer, though he is not aware that he uses the words wrongly in consequence. Most of the sub-divisions of parts of speech and most of the technical terms for other grammatical distinctions (e.g., all but the simple present, past, and future, in verb tenses) are mere lumber, and should find no place in our class-rooms.

*The teacher's object will be to anticipate customary errors of Indian pupils, and to remedy errors that occur.* The experienced teacher who has taken the trouble to keep a record of the common errors of his previous year's pupils, will have his anticipatory list by him. The inexperienced teacher will do well to take over such a list to begin with, or to refer to a departmental syllabus, if available, making his own alterations and departures as experience suggests. For purposes of remedy, all that is required is vigilance and sufficient knowledge of English in the teacher. The teacher is not free from the human

temptation to be easy going, but unless he resists it by watching persistently for the more serious blunders to eradicate, he is heaping up bad habits which have only to be unlearnt later on.

*Every teacher then should keep by him his anticipatory list or syllabus of common errors with room to supplement it as the outcome of experience.*

The third defect common in teaching English is the disregard of help afforded by the vernacular. There are many grammatical usages in which vernacular and English agree, many also in which they differ. Advantage should be taken of both similarities and contrasts. Assuming that the pupil begins English knowing some vernacular grammar already, to go through the process of teaching an identical usage or rule in English when all that is required is to refer to previous vernacular knowledge or habit is to waste time. Consider examples from the ordinary parts of speech the names and meanings of which it is convenient for the pupil to know for his study of his vernacular and of English.

#### *The Vernacular in Grammar Teaching*

The verb and the adjective in English have both exact equivalents in Urdu (viz., *ism fail* and *ism sift*), and these the pupil has presumably learnt already. He has learnt, that is to say, the meaning of each term and can apply his knowledge to examples. At present it is common to hear teachers in the early stage of English teaching taking the verb or adjective with a class as though it were an entirely fresh lesson, presenting examples on the black-board and after examination of them inducing, in the approved style of inductive procedure, the functions of a number of verbs or adjectives, to be followed by the definition and the name. This expenditure of energy may be saved by the simpler process of recalling to the pupil's mind the corresponding vernacular terms and meanings, revising as far as necessary, and then apportioning to them the equivalent terms in English. This can be followed by application of the English terms to instances first in vernacular and then in English sentences, in order to drive them home. In short, the process is essentially the same as that of teaching any new English

word—book, cool, headache,—by the ordinary translation method.

There are, on the other hand, a number of grammatical terms and usages in which vernacular and English differ. In this case the pupil will ordinarily transfer the vernacular habit to English, unless he is specially prevented from doing this. There are two ways of dealing with this difficulty. One is to habituate him to the new English, without reference to the contrasting vernacular, usage. The other way is to point the contrast with the vernacular. For reasons already given the direct method<sup>1</sup> should be preferred where it is found effectual; that is, reference to the vernacular contrast need not intervene. Thus the pupil will probably acquire the right order of words in a question by sheer practice rather than by deliberately exposing the difference in the vernacular and the English customs first. There are, however, cases in which a vernacular habit proves too strong for the pupil, and is obstinately persistent in his English. The English usage may be rather complicated, and the pupil is perplexed over its employment. An instance of this is the omission or insertion of 'that' before indirect speech, according as the introductory verb is a verb of question or of statement. Here the pupil will be helped by having a rule to refer to, and *the rule in English is most forcibly taught if the differences and agreements with the vernacular usage are clearly exposed*. In such a case the indirect method is the more direct eventually. The proper procedure would be to recall the vernacular manner of reporting a speech first, then to set up against vernacular examples corresponding examples in English, on the one hand examples of the statement where the vernacular and English usages agree, on the other of the questions where they differ by the omission of the connective word in English.

Where this procedure is adopted, it is not enough of itself to ensure the pupil's contracting the new (English)

<sup>1</sup> In this book by the term 'direct' method is intended any method reaching its end with the fewest steps. This, in the writer's opinion, is the only useful meaning to attach to it.

habit. This can follow only from reiterated practice, practice up to the point at which the rule passes out of use (and possibly out of memory), because the right usage has become automatic. *The rule serves merely as an intermediate support, where the pupil may be doubtful of his steps without it.* These once secure, the habit once ingrained, the support may be happily abandoned.

### *Rules in Grammar Teaching*

The principles of grammar teaching in English may now conveniently be crystallized in the form of a number of rules for general guidance.

1. Confine the matter to be taught to that which is found necessary for the pupil's speaking or writing of correct English, irrespective of whether the matter is technically grammatical or otherwise.

This point has already been elaborated.

2. Teach in close connection with the practice in speaking in the first stage of English, and with the practice in speaking, reading, and writing later. This is our familiar principle of co-ordinating all the branches of language teaching.

3. Select from the three methods—the heuristic, inductive and deductive—of teaching a grammatical fact, definition, or usage, the one which you find most readily effective, that is, which results most rapidly in accurate and ready usage. Whichever of these three methods is employed, *in no case can a further method, namely, the practice method, be dispensed with.* Without this the others are vain, with it the others may be superfluous.

4. Do not be afraid of sheer drill in correct grammatical usage, that is, of simple repetition by class, class-section and individual.

This is a corollary from, or a more forcible restatement of, rule 3.

5. *Have sample or typical sentences learnt by heart.* Make your pupils accumulate these reference sentences for guidance. Without a concrete instance an abstract rule leaves the pupil blind. With it the rule may often never appear, or quickly vanish. But the concrete instance must always be at hand, and therefore, in the pupil's mind for immediate reach.

6. Teach definitions and technical terms only as and when they are required, that is, as and when you find the pupil is helped to avoid mistakes in his English by knowing them.

Remember that technical terms are merely useful time-saving labels. They should, therefore, never be taught unless they are wanted for actual use.

The application of this principle will save the pupil a lot of mental lumber.

7. Save time and trouble by reference to previous knowledge or usage in the vernacular, where the pupil can grasp the English fact or acquire the English usage more rapidly by that reference. But often the fact can be made clear or the usage habitual without the intervention of the vernacular.

8. Grammar learnt incidentally in the general language lessons (as with the oral practice based on the reader) may be occasionally systematized in separate lesson periods; e.g., verb past, present and future, or the difference in use of the past and imperfect forms, can be thus revised, generalized and impressed.

For some of the more difficult uses (e.g., tense sequences, forms of direct and indirect speech) the number of these separate periods will increase. Adherence to a weekly time-table distribution of periods amongst different language branches should not be rigid.

9. As a general rule more attention should be paid to accuracy of idiom and of sound than to accuracy of grammar; that is, to the acquirement of particular English usages and of an intelligible pronunciation. So that in the language practice round the reader in the middle stage, the teacher should not delay practice in these for the sake of avoiding every mistake in grammar. The reason for this is that grammatical rules are rules of *general* application and come into play so frequently that repeated *incidental* correction may often serve to secure their observance. But the particular usages that make up what we call the English idiom, have to be acquired one by one, and experience shows that poverty or *ignorance of idiom is a more common defect in the adult student than ignorance of grammar*. On the other hand,



there are certain grammatical usages, that, because of their special difficulty, must receive special attention as soon as the pupil needs to use them. Thus question forms, indirect speech usages, verb tense sequences, are equally important with prepositional usages that belong rather to English idiom than to English grammar.

*Grammar Text-books*

A word on the use of a grammar text-book. Before the high stage, no text-book should be necessary. Readers contain enough grammatical matter for practice, and rules which are important enough for the pupil to learn are also important enough for him to take down in writing. Moreover, the good teacher does not need a text-book for his pupils. For he can pick the grammar to be taught them from his own experience and intelligence, making a book for reference himself.

The lazy teacher resorts to a grammar book to replace his own teaching, and the unqualified teacher is misled by a book into following its treatment and order without discrimination. In the high stage a suitable book may serve the pupil for reference—he should then be at a stage where he can use or learn to use a book of reference for himself.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CURSORY READER

A DISTINCTION has already been drawn between reading aloud and silent reading. It is now time to say something about silent reading, and in this connection about the selection and use of reading matter other than that treated as a centre for the intensive practice of English.

#### *Silent Reading*

Some silent reading of the text can be undertaken with the intensive reader in the middle stage: there is a place for an occasional preliminary home study of the easier amongst the text-book passages as a way of accustoming pupils to grapple with reading matter in English for themselves, giving an opportunity to the better or more enterprising pupils to discover an interest in independent reading, and so to welcome the offer of supplementary stories in English for them to read by themselves. In language study, as in all education, pupils must be treated as individuals as far as practicable, and adaptation of independent reading to the pupil's capacity and taste for it is a perfectly practicable means of adapting his language progress to his individual measure.

A more regular form of silent reading associated with the intensive reader is quiet study as a basis of continuous oral or written composition of a passage already treated in class, questions being set in the earlier stages of this exercise to guide the pupil in selecting matter for the answer. This, again, is a legitimate form of home study.

But the chief practice in silent reading is in connection with the supplementary or cursory reader and the reading of library books in English. The transition from the close study of a text in the intensive language lesson to the independent silent reading of books of general

interest is not, however, to be sudden or unprepared. In this chapter the terms 'cursory reader' and 'cursory reading' will be reserved for a type of reader and of treatment adapted to facilitate this transition.

*Function of the Cursory Reading Lesson*

The preparing of the pupil to take to independent reading is not the only purpose which the special cursory reading lesson may serve, though it is an important one. It may also serve to train the pupil in the rapid comprehension of an English passage, that is, to habituate and fit him to pierce to the gist of what he is reading ; and, thirdly, to confirm and extend his vocabulary. Of these three aims, the literary, the intellectual and the linguistic, the first and second are not peculiar to English—interest in reading, and the habit of reading with intelligence, should be inculcated in lessons in the vernacular. And, where the vernacular has been well taught to him, the pupil will approach his study of English already aware of the pleasure of independent reading, and already trained to read with application and, therefore, with some measure of intelligence.

Where he has had this preparation, the teacher's task in transferring the same habits to English will be much lightened, but it will never be entirely removed. It will still be necessary to get the pupil to realize that the foreign language also offers him matter for interest and entertainment, and it does not follow that because he can read his vernacular rapidly, he can do this without special practice in a more difficult and less familiar medium. These two aims, then, will influence the teacher in his choice of method in the cursory reading lesson.

As regards the third object, that of confirming and expanding the vocabulary, it is useful to begin by drawing a distinction between two kinds of vocabulary, or rather between two ways in which the vocabulary might be regarded. It will be remembered that our selection of the vocabulary to be taught has hitherto been based on the principle of utility, of its serviceableness to the pupil for his speaking and writing, rather than for his reading, of English ; and that we represented the pupil's vocabulary

progress as a process of widening constantly the circle of most useful and familiar verbal friends, by admitting more friends stage by stage in an order of decreasing utility. At any stage in this proceeding there will be the working vocabulary within the circle and the vocabulary outside it waiting to come in. And at each successive stage the working vocabulary grows larger as the waiting vocabulary grows less.

At no period, however, in the pupil's school career, and at no period for that matter in the life of the ordinary Englishman, is this waiting vocabulary ever entirely absorbed. No man uses, or knows to the point of use, all the words and expressions in the English language. But as he converses and reads, the Englishman in England keeps picking up fresh acquaintances as he goes along, and some of these he admits to his working circle. The process, however, is somewhat haphazard. He picks at random from here and there, and unwittingly.

The function of a teacher of a foreign language is to see that the process is not haphazard, and to decide and regulate the admissions to the pupil's circle of friends all along. This policy of deliberateness is undertaken in the interests of economy, for we cannot, with our limited time for teaching, afford to let the pupil admit less useful claimants to the circle and exclude the more useful.

### *Recognition and Application Vocabularies*

There are, in effect, three circles of vocabulary of practical interest to the teacher of English in India: firstly, the inner or working circle already referred to, and secondly, within the circle of all the other words and expressions in the language the intermediate circle of those who are recognized but not admitted to the inner circle, and lastly, the outer circle of those the school pupil need not trouble to meet. There are the friends, the acquaintances and the strangers.

Of the strangers nothing further need be said, except that it is for the teacher to detect them when he sees them, and to let them be. But the distinction between the friends and the acquaintances is an important

distinction to bear in mind, because it corresponds roughly but effectively to that between the purpose of the intensive and of the cursory lesson. The *object of the intensive lesson is primarily to add to the number of verbal friends, of the cursory lesson to add to the number of acquaintances.* In the intensive lesson the pupil is to be constantly accumulating fresh words and expressions for his own ordinary use in speech and writing, in the cursory lesson he should keep adding to the words whose meaning he recognizes when he meets them again but does not require, at the particular stage of his progress, to know so intimately that they enter his mind when he wishes to express the idea for which they stand. In other words, though he knows them for purposes of reading (and, incidentally, of understanding them when spoken by others), yet he does not know them well enough for use in his own speaking and writing.

This distinction between the application and the recognition vocabulary it is easy to draw too clear. Many recognition words of one stage will, of course, become application words of a stage later, though there are a good many words (e.g., 'nevertheless', 'forsooth', 'quoth', 'to box the compass', to take a few at random) which, because there are others which serve their purpose better, or because they are not current English or because they are technical, should not be admitted to that stage or should even be carefully barred from it.

Nor can we be sure that all the words in an intensive reader belong to the inner circle only. The teacher will inevitably have to choose among them, if only for the reason that he has not time to teach everything thoroughly. His own knowledge of English, and of the pupils' lives and attainments, will help him to choose wisely. Thirdly, in the cursory reader itself the pupil will, of course, meet again and again all or most of his friends of the inner circle, the cursory reading thus serving to confirm the friendship, and at the same time in proportion to his quickness and attention he will incidentally and unwittingly be making a few friends of his fresh acquaintances here and there.

But the rule will still hold that *in intensive reading the*

*teacher's conscious object is to add to the working vocabulary, in cursory reading to add to the reading vocabulary so that the power of reading English may rapidly expand.*

*Character of the 'Cursory Reader'*

We have now the data which determine the character of the cursory reader. It is more important than in the case of the intensive reader that the matter should be interesting to the pupil, for one object is to interest him in reading English books. Short passages should therefore be seldom chosen, but those pithy or entertaining; for it is the habit of continuous reading that we wish to develop, and interest accumulates in a continuous story where the reader carries on to the next chapter the excitement or interest of his previous reading. A good story with plenty of incident is suitable to begin with, varied with narratives of travel or explanation, accounts of momentous discoveries or inventions, descriptions (with graphic illustrations) of scenes or ways of life in other lands. The books should be short enough to admit of several being read through in each of the last three years of the high school course, for variety of matter and language is also needful.

In India unfortunately it is difficult to obtain suitable varied reading matter. For of books suitable to English children in England, since the Indian pupil inevitably knows less English than his English compeer, the language will be easy enough for him only where the matter is too young for his age; while if the matter is suitable the language is too difficult. This compels a resort to books specially written for Indian pupils, or to English books especially adapted. The former, however, scarcely exist, and so far the adaptations of the latter have been more by way of abridgment than by a simplification of the language to the prospective reader's level. The vital mistake is frequently made of preserving the language of the original on the ground that to alter it is to spoil it as literature. This may be true, but to avoid simplification on this ground is to miss the points that—

1. What we are out to teach at the school stage is not literature but language, and

2. That even if this proposition be contested, *the one way to impart a distaste for literature is to confront the pupil with something he cannot understand and to call it English literature*, or to expect him to gain an interest in reading English books by struggling with them. As premised in the first chapter of this book, we defeat our object if we pitch our aims too high.

For Indian pupils to find enjoyment in reading English the first requirement is the provision of enough suitable reading matter. And this matter can be provided by—

1. Writing-books for the purpose.
2. Taking books already existing in English, suitable in matter *and, therefore*, too difficult in language, and rewriting them in language understandable by the Indian pupil of the age concerned.

For the former work there are few with the time or the talents, but the latter can and should be undertaken widely. This is where provincial Text-book Committees can help.

The reader should not conclude, from the present paucity of really suitable matter, that the cursory reading lesson is not worth attempting. There are books enough to begin and continue on, though they might be better and there might be more of them.

But what can be concluded is that since the books available are not as suitable as they might be, since there is less that attracts Indian pupils and it attracts them less easily than English pupils in England, all the more trouble should be taken to remove the difficulties, if Indian pupils are to take to reading English books with profit or pleasure at all. This, then, brings us to the subject of method.

#### *Method with the 'Cursory Reader'*

The method of introducing the pupil to silent reading in English is governed by two main considerations :—

1. The ground must be covered fairly rapidly, or interest will flag.
2. The matter read must be understood, or interest will not arise.

As the teaching is not concerned with a 'use'

vocabulary, the teacher need not wait to work new words into the pupils' minds or practice. But he has to make sure that they understand as they go along.

The reading for this purpose may be partly oral, partly silent—an even uniform treatment will not fulfil our purpose. As a general rule, the more difficult passages should be dealt with orally. The teacher can prepare for a fairly rapid reading of them by such expedients as explaining special difficulties in language at the end of some other lesson, e.g., in the intensive lesson period, or wherever he can find time : intimating the topic or event that the next passage will tell about ; or, finally, if the passage present too many difficulties, relating the gist of it to the pupils, so that they may lose nothing of the story, but leaving it open to them to read it or not for themselves. The easier passages the pupils can be expected to read silently and independently. It may be as well to guide their reading by setting questions to which a reading of a passage gives the answers ; and this also supplies a means of test. The exact procedure will vary with the circumstances. Pupils who are clearly interested will continue their reading alone, but can be assisted by reserving special stumbling blocks for separate class (or individual) explanation. Apart from passages too difficult for rapid treatment (of which the teacher contents his class by narrating the story), and passages easy enough for independent individual silent reading, passages of an intermediate grade of difficulty are suitable for cursory treatment in class. The following suggestions may assist in securing the two main objects of reasonably rapid reading and sufficient understanding of what is being read :—

1. A hint of what is coming may or may not be given, at the teacher's discretion. To give such a hint may arouse interest ('now we shall see where Mohan Lal really hid the money') ; but, again, if the passage is easy enough it is a superfluous aid.

2. Either the teacher or a good reader should read the passage aloud. It is no use putting on a boy who has constantly to be corrected.

3. Difficult or new words or expressions should be explained as the reading goes on. Here the quickest



means of explanation should be utilized, the vernacular being used if other means take time.

4. There should be no waiting to practise the vocabulary, for obvious reasons.

5. Incidental questions, especially to weaker pupils, can show whether the matter is being understood as the reading proceeds, and questions or recapitulation can test or confirm this at the conclusion.

6. If mispronunciations abound, the teacher will have to do most of the reading aloud himself, while remembering to increase the time and care given to pronunciation in intensive teaching. But if they are not too many or serious, the slighter errors may be disregarded or momentarily corrected, and more serious errors be noted for separate treatment afterwards.

### *Library Reading*

The cursory reading lesson will not have fulfilled one of its main purposes, encouragement and preparation of the pupil to read English books independently, unless it is followed by his actually doing so. But facilities must be put in his way, in the shape of as suitable a library of English reading as can be put together. This library is best sectioned classwise, each class having its own section in its own class-room—thus the English teacher can make a point of knowing enough about the books to be able to advise and assist individual pupils in their choice of reading matter, and can himself, or through a pupil, keep a record of the issue of books.

The common temptation of teacher and pupil to give undue attention to mere reference reading ought to be resisted, though *pupils should be directed and trained in consulting books of reference on school subjects.*

Whether this independent reading of library books should be reckoned a part of the ordinary school studies by an insistence, say, on so much being read per term and by a test of the pupil's knowledge of what he has read is an open question. In the ideal school, where all study is interesting, the pupil might welcome this association, but then in the ideal school it would be unnecessary. In actual schools where school study is regarded as work, and outside reading as pleasure, to

make this reading part of the work is to run the risk of killing at its birth the very spirit we wish to call into being, reading for its own interest and not for an interest that is merely derived and will therefore cease with the withdrawal of the associated motive. In practice, however, the two motives are not necessarily alternative: a pupil may find real interest in a book he is *expected* by the teacher to read, and tact and good teaching lead to a gradual strengthening of the immediate interest. There is something to be said for setting aside a school period weekly for definite silent reading of library books, or for the teacher to tell some story or to speak on some topic of interest which the pupils may find further developed in some library book. Success depends on the teacher's own aptitudes. The library should in any case contain several copies of books for which there is a frequent simultaneous demand.

As regards the relation of school exercises to library reading, the practice of encouraging pupils to tell the class about what they have been reading, and to write on parts or chosen aspects of their topics, has special advantages. A pupil speaks and writes the more willingly and carefully when he can choose a topic that interests him.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE VERNACULAR IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH (INCLUDING TRANSLATION)

SOMETHING has been said in previous chapters about the co-ordination of the teaching of the vernacular and of the modern foreign language English; and something also about the connections that may economically be set up between what the pupil has learnt in the vernacular and what he is learning in English. The two aspects of language study cannot be entirely separated, but it is convenient to begin this chapter by pursuing the second topic further.

The use that may legitimately be made of the pupil's knowledge of a vernacular in explaining the meanings of English words and expressions, and in teaching grammatical usages or terms in English by reference to similarities or contrasts in the vernacular, has been treated at some length. But there inevitably arises as the pupil progresses the question of the place and possibilities of translation from English into a vernacular and from a vernacular into English as an assistance to the acquisition of English.

#### *What is Translation?*

In order to arrive at an answer the reader should first be clear as to the difference between the type of exercise contemplated and the two uses of the vernacular already discussed. *Prima facie*, explanation of new English expressions in a vernacular is only translation from English into a vernacular under another name. 'Here is the new word "love"'. It means "*mahabbat*". 'Upside down' means '*ulta pulta*', and so on.

Of course it might equally be regarded as translation from the vernacular into English, since for making his meaning clear it is all the same whether the teacher begins with the vernacular and gives the equivalent English, or meeting first with the English substitutes

for it the vernacular. In either case the effect is the same, namely, to interpret the new English word.

But between this process and the type of exercise in translation that is common in the higher stages of English teaching there are certain differences. The purpose of the translation exercise is not to find for the pupil the meaning of an unfamiliar word, but to get the pupil to express in one language the nearest obtainable equivalent of a series of meanings or ideas presented to him in another. To do this at all adequately the pupil must already be quite familiar with the vocabularies available for his purpose in both the languages, and at any rate in the language into which the translation is to be made, the vocabularies must be 'working' or 'application' and not merely recognition vocabularies. In other words, in the translation exercise the work is primarily the pupil's not the teacher's, and it consists not in giving a preliminary serviceable meaning for a mere word or phrase but in finding the best words that will give the most completely equivalent meaning of a continuous passage. This exercise is an exercise in translation as an art, and the reader will rightly conclude that between it and the teacher's interpretation of word meanings in a vernacular, there is a world of difference both in the actual process and in its difficulty. *Translation as an Art is a difficult exercise, suitable only for comparatively advanced pupils.*

### *The Vernacular in Teaching English Idiom*

Secondly, we may contrast this type of translation exercise with the process of using the pupil's knowledge of a vernacular in clarifying and impressing some new English usage, a process already advocated for use on occasion in the chapter on the teaching of grammar, though, as was stated in that chapter, the method is one that may be employed in introducing or impressing any sufficiently common English usage or speech-habit, whether it be technically classed as grammar or otherwise. Before distinguishing this process from that of translation I shall elucidate its significance further, both to contrast it with the exercise in translation the more

clearly, and because it is important that the teacher of English should realize its scope and usefulness.

Let the reader ask himself from what sources the great majority of the unEnglish English, spoken and written by the Indian student comes. We need not hesitate for our answer. *Nearly all the mistakes in English idiom and construction made by the Indian student are due to his knowledge of a mother tongue.* Due to his mother tongue habits would be a better way of putting it, for language acquisition is habit rather than knowledge. Learning a language is forming an increasing number of speech habits, and confirming them by repetition. And language habits are not exempt from the ordinary habit of habits—that they are hard to unlearn. They persist. It is just this strength on their part that is the undoing of the learner of a new language, for his old habits pursue him along his new path. This is the reason, then, why the new (and often the older) pupils in English still say ‘I treat with’, and ‘What to mention’, and ‘Comparatively older than’, and ‘I ask that why’, and ‘I shall come yesterday’, and hundreds of other vernacularisms masquerading as English. Such sentences do credit to his conservatism. The old is easy, and the new is hard. But for this very reason the source of these mistakes provides an obviously economical and impressive means of teaching distinctive English usages. This is to be found in the device of *deliberate contrast of the two languages where the common English we would be implanting differs in idiom or usage from the vernacular.* ‘From the known to the unknown’, is, he may rejoin, exactly the procedure that the pupil has been following—introducing his known Urdu into his unknown English. But this, as the student should be aware, is exactly what the maxim must not be taken to mean. ‘Use the known to teach the unknown’, is the real interpretation. And one way of using it is by the method of deliberate contrast; by bringing the two usages into set opposition to one another; by confronting contrasts.

Now between this process and the translation exercise are two essential differences. In translating a passage from one language to another the object before teacher

and pupil is not to *inspect* the two languages so much as to obtain a good translation. In other words, the attention is directed to the exactness of the rendering. And this accomplished, the work is done. But the plan here advocated is otherwise. The equivalent once obtained, the real work is but begun. This consists in an inspection of the differences. The pupil is taught to say 'I asked why he came', not by translating the Urdu equivalent for this, but by carefully observing that the little connecting word '*ki*' used in Urdu has not its corresponding 'that' in English. 'That' is left out. He then proceeds to act on his discovery. He practises the English. *Contrast for the sake of illumination. After illumination practice.* A translation exercise is a very different thing.

Secondly, exercises in translation the teacher chooses on the principle of graduated difficulty. The question he asks in choosing a passage is 'Is this of about the right standard?' 'Can my class do it with a little, but not a disheartening effort?' And he will choose a passage of reasonable length. But for the purpose of contrasting usages these questions do not arise. The passage will, of course, be short—a single sentence, for we are instilling one idiom, one speech habit. And the question is not one of difficulty or standard, for all we are about is setting in contrast to one another two sentences, of which the vernacular one is familiar, and of which the English is selected because it is a sentence so common and useful in English, and yet one in which the pupil is so apt to err, that we resort to this particular expedient for teaching it. So if it is our old enemy translation back again, it is only after a radical reformation. He is now our friend.

### *The Vernacular in Teaching Grammar*

A third use of the vernacular—in the teaching of English grammar.

Here the maxim 'from the known to the unknown' crops up again. At present teachers of English grammar often forget that the pupil has learnt some grammar in the vernacular, and that, even if he has learnt but

little, he still has learnt to speak his vernacular fairly grammatically. Of both facts it is wasteful not to take advantage. There is a grammar that is the same through several, perhaps through all languages, for speech is but the expression of mind and must conform to its laws. But there is also much grammar in which languages differ, for the same instrument may be wielded in different ways. Urdu and English have a good deal of grammar in common. This is true, for example, of several parts of speech. To labour again as a new lesson the process of arriving at a definition of a part of speech already familiar in the vernacular is to ignore a present help. All that is required is to refer to—if necessary revise—the vernacular definition and to give the vernacular word its English equivalent. The teacher will be doing just what he would do if he wanted to give the English for 'khubsurat', or 'insan'. He will translate, and impress the English term. This is the simplest instance of using the known to teach the unknown. It should not be neglected.

Where, on the other hand, the grammatical constructions differ, here is the opportunity for applying our principle of contrast, and for confronting the two differing usages with one another; insisting on the difference, and practising (orally, to save time) the English grammar habit that is to be mastered up to the point of ready—even automatic—use. By so doing a multitude of errors, and much hard labour, will be anticipated.

### *Collaboration between the Teacher of English and the Teacher of the Mother Tongue*

So much, then, for three directions in which the known vernacular may be made to help with the unknown English. But there are wider aspects of this question than those indicate. There is the big question, for instance, of the division of labour between the Vernacular and English in teaching what we may call the Art of language as such. Every high school pupil should acquire, as far as he can, the art of speaking, the art of writing, the art of reading silently, and (not only for its own sake

but chiefly as subsidiary to the other arts and to an appreciation of literature) the art of reading aloud. It is not my purpose to deal in detail with each of these language arts here. What I wish to impress upon my reader is the importance of establishing an understanding between the teacher of the Vernacular and the teacher of English as to the part each is to play in teaching these arts, and a conscious systematic co-operation between them. How to speak well, read well, and enjoy good reading—there are methods of teaching each of these to the pupil in whatever language he speaks, or writes, or reads, and the language habits thus acquired hold good whatever language be his medium, so far as he knows that language.

Take the art of writing as an illustration. In order to write well a pupil must realize the importance of gathering and disentangling his ideas, casting aside what is not wanted, working the rest into a connected system, disposing in their right places the right paragraph, the right sentence, the right word. To realize the importance of all this is but one step towards acquiring the art of writing, a step which is often overlooked but which should invariably be taken. Realizing the difference between good and bad writing, the pupil has next to act on his realization, and to act repeatedly till the act becomes habitual and more easily successful with experience. In other words, to write well comes only of stubborn practice, and that practice of the right rules. And the right habits—of sifting and ordering, and seeking to express, one's thought in writing—being taught by the teacher of one language will overflow into the pupil's use of any other language, when he comes to write it.

And this is true equally of the other arts. But who is to make himself responsible for initiating the pupil into these arts of language? The answer that first suggests itself is, the teacher of the mother tongue, both because he can begin earlier, and because the beginning should be made in the better known medium. There would thus be fewer difficulties to deal with, and the pupil would come to his second language the better prepared to use his gathering vocabulary effectively. *Ceteris*



*paribus*, the habits that condition effective speaking and reading aloud, intelligent reading to oneself, effective writing, and literary discrimination and appreciation, should all be inculcated primarily and predominantly through and in a mother tongue.

But the conditions in India are peculiar, the *cetera* might not be *paria*. The circumstances attending the teaching of a vernacular and English may differ significantly. Often, more often than not, the teaching of the vernacular is in the hands of the less highly qualified teacher, who cannot be expected to undertake instruction in the language arts with the same competence or intelligence as the teacher of English. The headmaster may do unwisely to leave the greater share in the work to him. And besides the difference in the teachers, there may be differences in the languages themselves—in the possibilities which the languages offer for effective teaching of the arts. If, for example, English offers more variety of interesting, well-written matter suitable to Indian pupils of high school stage than is yet available in Urdu or Punjabi, there is at least another argument for giving the teacher of English a big share in the responsibility of teaching the pupil how to read to purpose by himself, because there is better material for his practice.

But whatever be the actual solution of the problem of teaching the language arts in our schools, my intention in this chapter is to insist first on the existence of the problem, and secondly on the importance of every headmaster of a high school attempting a practical solution, by deliberately entrusting to the one or other teacher the teaching of language arts as a prominent part of his duty, and securing co-operation between the different language teachers in doing so.

### *Translation as an Art*

We are now in a position to face the question of the place and possibilities of translation as an art in the teaching of English at the school stage. Reasons have been given why this exercise cannot in any case be successfully undertaken except by comparatively advanced pupils, because of its inherent difficulty. But transla-

tion may be from English into the vernacular, or from the vernacular into English; and the two processes are not equally difficult. The former is the easier, for this reason. In the language *into which* the translation is made the vocabulary to be used will be the pupil's *working vocabulary*, that is (as already explained), the words and expressions to represent the ideas or meanings in his mind must be so familiar that they leap without trouble into consciousness. In the language *from which* the translation is made this degree of familiarity is unnecessary: the pupil has only to recognize the words and their meanings when he sees them, he has not to think them, or call them into mind, himself; they need belong only to his recognition vocabulary.

### *Translation from English*

But to translate into his vernacular is to translate into a medium where the working vocabulary which he needs for the purpose is immensely larger than it is in English, placing far more expressions immediately at his service.

It is true that English is a more difficult medium to *translate from* than is his vernacular. He has more difficulty, that is, in grasping the meaning of the passage for translation where it is given him in English and not in his vernacular. But as the vocabulary of words he recognizes in English is much wider than that of words he uses himself, it is correspondingly easier for him to get at the meaning of the English passage, than to give the same meanings in English.

Thus in order of difficulty, given the same set of meanings to deal with, *the easiest type of translation is probably that from vernacular to vernacular, usually called paraphrase; intermediate is translation from English into the vernacular; translation from the vernacular into English is the most difficult.*

With vernacular paraphrase we are not concerned in the teaching of English. Of the other two, the use of the easier, viz. translation from English, may be now considered. Of our four main aims in teaching English—teaching to speak, to understand spoken English, to

read, and to write English—translation from English is a process related to the second and third, and they all involve understanding a passage given in English. But in teaching pupils to hear or to read English with understanding, other methods are available besides exercises in translation into vernacular, and these have been explained at length in previous chapters. And the principle has been propounded and maintained that where the vernacular can be excluded from the lesson in English and the teaching be conducted in English itself, to introduce vernacular unnecessarily is to divert time to vernacular practice which can be ill spared from practising English. As a means of *teaching* the pupil English, exercises in translation into the vernacular seem, therefore, out of place. But there is a function which this exercise can fulfil more conveniently than any other—the function of testing the pupil's progress in understanding what he reads. The reason for its special appropriateness here is not far to seek. Where one's object is simply to test a pupil's *comprehension* of a foreign language, the medium in which he gives its meaning must itself present the least difficulty, and, therefore, it must be his vernacular. Hence *translation into a vernacular is the surest method of testing a pupil's progress in understanding English*. It is also the most convenient, for we may adapt the passage in English exactly to the kind or level of vocabulary and the complexity of construction or usage of which we wish to measure his grasp.

But there is one practical objection to its use for this purpose, *in public examinations*, namely, that if translation into vernacular be a customary method of test, the ordinary teacher preparing his class for that examination is likely to embody it in his *teaching*—he will teach translation into the vernacular as a regular separate exercise for examination purposes; and this in spite of the fact that he will actually be defeating his purpose in so doing. For this reason translation into the vernacular should be confined to an occasional method of test for use in schools, under a headmaster who realizes that *a good method of test is not necessarily the best method of teaching*, and that the best way to train a pupil to read

or hear English with understanding is not to be constantly turning the passage into the vernacular, but to cultivate the habit of grasping the sense directly with the least use of the vernacular that will save time and confusion. As the pupil's English vocabulary expands this resort to the vernacular should contract proportionately, until the pupil of the high school stage is able to hear and read and use English free of the vernacular, that is, without turning his mind to the vernacular whenever he wishes to understand or use English. The pupil who has acquired this power will find no difficulty with translation tests, provided he knows his vernacular; on the contrary, he should come the better prepared for them by the greater progress he has made in English through the omission of the time-taking intervening step.

### *Translation into English*

To turn now to translation into English from a vernacular. Here again for similar reasons *this exercise has no place as a regular method of teaching English in schools.* As a method of test, again, it has its use. But in this exercise it is not the pupil's power of understanding English that is being tested, nor his recognition vocabulary; but the extent and kind and grasp of his working vocabulary. In this it has as a method of test an advantage over exercises in simple composition. In ordinary composition the candidate can pick and choose his ideas and his language within wide limits, within the limits set by the topic on which he speaks or writes. Consequently he tends to use only the vocabulary which he knows or thinks he knows, and even to avoid ideas or meanings which he has not the English to express. The examiner has no means of measuring his power over the vocabulary he does not choose to employ. There may be regions of vocabulary which come within the scope of the English required at the high school stage that the candidate escapes a test of, according more to his examination tactics than to his real knowledge of language. It is precisely here that translation into English comes in; for here by his choice of passages for translation the examiner can limit the candidate far more narrowly,

and indeed can inevitably detect ignorance of common English by the candidate's substitution of a more circuitous or less apt phrase. The candidate is closely tied in the topic and language at his disposal.

But here again, for precisely the same reason as before, *this exercise is to be recommended not as a public test but as an expedient for occasional use by an enlightened headmaster.* For as a method of teaching a pupil to use English, to accumulate a working vocabulary and to use that vocabulary with effect, it is inferior to exercises elsewhere described in this book

## CHAPTER X

### THE HIGH STAGE

#### *Free Use of English the Aim*

No sudden break in method of teaching marks the transition from the middle stage, where the reader is the centre, to the high stage, which hopes to send forth the pupil at the end of his school course able to dispense with the teacher's aid in conversing, speaking, understanding, reading and writing enough English to serve him in his ordinary social intercourse and in the college lecture room.

But if the pupil is to secure this freedom, the last years of his study at school must prepare him definitely for it. In actual fact it must be admitted that the standard here suggested is only attained by a minority of pupils—the quality of the work done in the matriculation or school final examination is proof enough of this. But poor results are largely due to removable causes, amongst them being the teacher's own deficiency in English, his inadequate preparation for his special duty, and his adoption of uneconomical methods. The last drawback to the pupils' progress it is the purpose of this book to assist the teacher in removing, and with it in time and degree the other two, for the teachers of the future will be the very pupils who may hope by better methods of study to have attained a higher standard in English than the present generation of teachers, and thus by their own greater progress and greater familiarity with better methods to initiate a virtuous circle of successively increasing improvements. These will again be accentuated by an improved preparation of the teacher under training—a topic to be treated later—and by better methods of teaching English at the University stage, a topic that it does not fall within the scope of this

book to do more than touch upon by implication here and there.

Granted a more truly economical procedure in the earlier stages of the teaching, it is worth while indicating certain directions in which the high may make departures from the middle stage procedure.

### *Continuous Oral Composition*

Thus *more time and attention will be given to continuous oral composition*, and the topics selected for it will be less closely associated with the lessons immediately preceding in the intensive reader. But continuous speech that is not based on text-book matter just preceding should not at first be expected of the pupil without special preparation of his exercise on each occasion. This and a careful selection of attractive and useful topics are conditions of progress. The following classes of topic may accordingly be suggested for guidance, but with the proviso that the teacher should always be alert to profit from any incident of the moment or particular circumstance of his class or school that may have for the pupils a special interest of its own—

1. Simple *narratives* of personally interesting events, e.g., an accident witnessed; an actual railway journey; the most pleasant or unpleasant occurrence of the past year; a relative's marriage; a festival; the building of a house; the making of a garden; an epidemic; a quarrel; a football match; the mending of a desk; the purchase of a bicycle; a recent storm, etc.

2. *Descriptions* of scenes familiar or accessible, e.g., the school garden, a picture, the river, the dhobi ghat, the tennis lawn, the sweetmeat shop, the road to the neighbouring village, a temple, a costume, a pair of boots, the room I work in, etc.

3. *Explanations* of simple processes or phenomena, e.g., the working of a well, the riding of a bicycle, the construction of a door handle, the putting on of a *pugaree*, the making of a shirt, the game of hockey, from the writing to the posting of a letter, the way to the railway station, the milking of a cow, the writing of a book or an essay, etc.

4. *Arguments or discussions* on questions within the scope of the pupil's near interests and working vocabulary, e.g., the best day in the week for the weekly half-holiday; how to secure enough games' play for all the pupils; where should the new swimming bath be built; possible improvements in the boarding house building; the better working of the school co-operative club; practical measures to ensure a good milk supply; hobbies that might be encouraged; difficulties in conducting the Boy Scout troop, etc.

5. Topics in connection with other school work, e.g., a summary in English of what was learnt in yesterday's History lesson; an account of the last Geography lesson (e.g., of its procedure, not of what was learnt in it); a description of a balance (used in the Science lesson); the method of drawing a flower pot; the making of a ruler (made by the carpentry class pupils); the marking out of garden plots, etc.

6. English reproduction of compositions already done in the vernacular. This should not be mere translation, but an account in the pupil's English, and to avoid too close a repetition of the original a day or two may intervene after the original exercise.

7. Topics making an easy appeal to the productive imagination, e.g., another ending to the last story read; the school compound to-morrow if the sun disappeared from the heavens to-night at 8; an argument with a ticket collector; a lost letter; a missing friend; an earthquake, etc.

The seven types of topic given above do not represent a logical sub-division, but rather different directions in which the teacher may usefully look for matter that may both rouse the pupil's interest and bring his working vocabulary into play. Certain further cautions should be observed:—

(a) *Topics which demand a new vocabulary should be avoided.* The continuous oral practice is a means of practising the working vocabulary already acquired, not of acquiring a fresh vocabulary. The latter is the concern of the intensive lesson associated with the reader.

(b) *The topics should be definite and concrete, not*



vague and general. A particular concrete situation is at once more interesting to a pupil, and graduates for him the difficulty of collecting and sifting ideas.

In the suggestive lists given above the topics might, as a rule, be given a more precise aim, e.g., 'the making of a garden' under heading 1 might be expanded—'To explain to a friend for his guidance how you plotted out your garden for different kinds of plants.'

'The river', under heading 2—'To describe what you see from a boat in mid-stream looking up and down stream and towards first one bank and then the other,' or, 'To try to make clear to a friend who has never seen a river what the river near your school is like.'

'The game of hockey', under heading 3—'To explain to a boy who can play football but has never played hockey how hockey is played.'

'The better working of the school co-operative club', heading 4, may be sufficiently definite as it stands. A special turn may be given to the theme by suggesting that it is to be an answer to an opponent who thinks the club is no use.

'A description of a balance', heading 5—add 'To one who has never seen a balance', or 'To one who is acquainted with balances but has not seen the balance to be described.'

The same topic can be treated by different pupils from different points of view, or by the same pupils now from one point of view, now from another, e.g., 'The way from the school to the railway station' may be treated as a direction to a complete stranger, or to one who knows the town but has forgotten the exact way to the station, or as information about interesting places on the route, or as a discussion of alternative ways through or outside the town; or again as a direction given to a child or to an educated adult.

(c) Different pupils, or pupil groups, may co-operate by taking different parts or aspects of the same topic, e.g., 'the construction of a stool' (made by pupils of the carpentry class): one section may mention and enumerate the uses of the tools employed, another the planning of the stool; a third the actual process of making

it ; a fourth the main defects found in the article when made, and so on.

'The railway station' may be subdivided into the chief parts of the station with their uses ; the chief officials and their duties ; what a traveller with baggage does between entering the station and the starting of his train ; the platform scene ; etc.

(d) Definite observation or collecting of information may sometimes be preparatory, e.g., the school compound may be described first from memory, afterwards from special observation of it ; or half the class may be set to observe in advance and the other half not, in which case one pupil can check another. This exercise helps pupils to realize how careless one's observation is in any matter where it is not specially directed or interested. This may be tested by describing, e.g., other people's appearance, or dress, or a friend's house, or the 'wheel of my bicycle', or 'the pictures on the wall of my room', or 'the wares in the shop across the road', or 'the police "choki"', etc., before and after deliberate observation for the purpose.

(e) The spirit of emulation and competition may be usefully called into play. Class sections can take sides in advancing arguments, and counter-arguments, or class groups can set up their leaders to make short speeches on the same topic, tossing for order of speaking and the teacher deciding the winners. Care must be taken here to give the worse speakers their opportunity, as by making each section arrange its members in merit order, the teacher selecting a pupil of the same number in the order from each group in turn.

### *On and Off the 'Reader'*

In adopting any or all of these suggestions it will be necessary to keep in mind that the reader will still supply the data for much oral practice, and that there should be no sudden breaking away from the principles of procedure outlined for the middle stage of the teaching. Again, some of the types of exercises here suggested may prove beyond the pupils' level of attainment : efforts must not be demanded for which the pupil has to spend undue time

on gathering matter or which are found to result in long speeches at the expense of accuracy. If a longish speech teem with errors of language, shorter or easier exercises should be substituted. Careful graduation is a condition of sound steady progress. On the other hand, the teacher should not hesitate to try independent composition occasionally even in the middle stage, if there are pupils ready for it.

And as regards the conduct of the lesson or exercise the point should be reiterated that *it is not so much the matter as the language of the composition that claims attention*. It is, therefore, errors or improvements in language and expression that the teacher and his pupils should watch for in the speeches delivered. But, again, the speaker should not be interrupted in the middle of his speech: the errors should be saved up for correction and *impression of the corrections* after he has finished. If he makes too many, it is better not to let him proceed.

Lastly, as regards the relation of this work in English to the teaching of the vernacular. The exercises suggested above are more easily undertaken in the vernacular<sup>1</sup> than in English, and that at an earlier stage. *The habit of continuous speaking on things in one's mind should be cultivated in the vernacular before the same habit is called into play in English*. And because the pupil has in his vernacular an easier medium of verbal expression, the exercises which he attempts there may be proportionately more ambitious.

### *Written Exercises*

Topics of the kind suggested above for oral exercises are, of course, equally suitable for written work, for which preliminary preparation should always be demanded; and the teacher must be somewhat cautious of introducing written exercises of any length for which oral exercises have not been prepared. It is true that he

<sup>1</sup> It is not the business of this book to treat the teaching of the vernacular except as it concerns the teaching of English; but for suggestions for suitable and interesting exercises in the vernacular reference is invited to *The Teaching of English* (considered as a vernacular) by W. S. Tomkinson (Oxford University Press), chapters II and III.

wishes his pupil to be able, when he leaves the high school, to write English independently, but if the total time at disposal in the six or seven years of the pupil's study of English do not admit of his attaining this standard, harm not benefit results from forcing the pace. If, on the other hand, a wise choice of the pupil's *working vocabulary* has been made throughout the course, it should be possible for some or most of the pupils to write freely on topics within the scope of that vocabulary, and written compositions without *immediate* previous oral preparation may be undertaken, carefully graduated as to difficulty of matter, of vocabulary, and in length. As to the extent to which independent writing can be profitably expected, every teacher must decide from his experience, and his knowledge of the capabilities of his pupils.

The chief reason for keeping the oral and the written work in the main closely connected is that the oral and written practices act and re-act on one another. A written exercise based on the language and matter of an oral exercise preceding it serves to confirm in the pupil's mind both the general and particular language lessons taught through the oral exercise, and so re-enforces the oral speech habits. At the same time, the particular speech habits and the principles of arrangement and effective expression illustrated in the oral exercise, give the pupil a similar training for his written expression. This is obviously the more definite and impressive where the subject-matter is the same.

The writing of compositions long enough to call into play skill in *composition*, apart from simple knowledge of vocabulary, cannot be taught in English without taking note of what has already been taught in the vernacular. There are certain elementary principles of arrangement, of paragraphing, or sentence order and construction, and certain principles governing effective narration, description, explanation, exposition, or argument, which unless they have been previously inculcated in the teaching of the vernacular throw an additional burden on the teacher of English in the high stage.

Where this instruction has been disregarded in teaching the vernacular, time taken over teaching the forms

of effective written expression means so much the less time available to the pupil for accumulating the English language. But since a useful vocabulary is useless of itself, unless the pupil knows how to use it, some training in the art of composition cannot be omitted. In this book, which is concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language and the problems peculiar to that subject, space is wanting for more than a few hints on method in a matter which should be treated in books on the teaching of the vernacular.

### *Teaching Continuous Written Composition*

*The first thing of importance is to get the pupil to realize the value of planning his composition beforehand.* This can be done by making him contrast actual examples of orderly and muddled composition, and trying to discover the plan, or order of topics, and the connections between them, in either case. This may be done most impressively by keeping, as far as possible, to the same subject-matter, thus proving the superior lucidity of order over disorder. The next step is to accustom him to effective planning of his own composition. Here there are two conditions favouring success.

1. *Be sure that the topic is one on which the pupil has plenty to say.* Suggestions of the kind of topic that may arouse interest and thoughts in children of secondary department age have been already given. It remains to add that choice of topic may be permitted and encouraged in the pupil within the limits of the working vocabulary. But the teacher of English should see that the pupil does not confine himself to too few topics to cover the range of vocabulary required of him.

2. Take care that the plan is the pupil's own. What he has to do is to express his own thoughts lucidly, not somebody else's. To impose a plan upon him beforehand is to restrict him to ideas within the limits of that plan, and to discourage individuality. The teacher of English may find himself confronted with mechanical habits of composition already implanted. Schools are not uncommon in which the pupil is given sets of ready-made plans for different classes of topic, e.g.,

birth, life, death, character (on important person-ages); advantages, disadvantages, conclusion (a country life, etc.);

structure, uses, upkeep (the cow, etc.).

The idea presumably is that if the pupil is given half a dozen frameworks, all he has to do with any topic set him is to decide into which it fits best and start away. The framework, however, should fit the matter and not *vice versa*. And the secret of success is to have enough matter of the pupil's own to suggest its own most suitable ordering.

3. It is not advisable to make all pupils adopt the same way of arranging their ideas. One way (the one which I adopt myself if my ideas come to me somewhat at random) is to jot down all the relevant ideas which come to the mind concentrating on the subject, and then to number them off in order of most effective presentation to a reader. There is thus a provisional plan to work on. But often, in fact usually, this provisional plan alters and develops as the writing proceeds and fresh ideas arise as one warms to the work. Similarly the pupil must not be the slave of his plan; but after finishing his writing he may be encouraged to attach—marginally or otherwise—a brief outline of his exposition.

4. The connection between each paragraph or sub-topic must be clear in the pupil's mind. For this reason he may examine in his reader or elsewhere examples of paragraphing, of the different kinds of connection obtaining between paragraphs, and the methods of making those connections clear to the reader. There is a right and a wrong way of introducing every paragraph. A good method of enforcing this lesson is to confront the pupil with pairs of paragraphs, otherwise similar but differently introduced.

5. The necessity of order within these paragraphs can be similarly taught, and the importance for stating the theme of the paragraphs of its introductory sentences, and of its concluding sentences for driving the message home.

6. Experiments may be made with different types of sentence, periodic, loose, and (possibly) balanced sentences and with the effect of varying word orders.

7. Special guidance should also be given in *description* of scenes (seizing the outstanding features first), *explanation* of processes (as by stating the purpose of a machine first, and then the means *in order of dependence*) or *exposition* of a simple theme or proposition (e.g., in the theme 'should the weekly half-holiday be on Saturday?' enumerating first the purpose of the half-holiday, and then considering on which day in the week it would best fulfil that purpose, etc.). But beyond conveying to the pupil general principles the teaching should, as said before, encourage variety of procedure, so long as the pupil successfully conveys his meaning. And it is possible to spend too much time on niceties in style and manipulation of matter that can be taught or learnt by students more easily after the school stage.

In treating this subject of written composition I have been at pains to avoid the use of the word 'essay', because that term carries with it misleading implications. The word 'essay' has acquired the unfortunate significance of a piece of writing, of a decent length, on a topic set beforehand by the teacher and foreign to the pupil's ordinary interests. It implies a disquisition on a subject about which the pupil would not ordinarily dream of writing. The written composition to be encouraged in school is just the opposite of this. *What the pupil has to learn is how to communicate most clearly and readily the thoughts he ordinarily has*, not those he has laboriously to evolve out of his inner consciousness. And in teaching him English it is just this expression of his own thoughts in English that is the goal of the teaching. Consequently where the subject-matter itself presents obstinate difficulties, the time for clothing it in English has not yet come.

### *Letter-writing*

Something remains to be said on two special types of written exercise which have long been in favour in Indian schools, and have acquired a kind of traditional precedence. One of these is letter-writing, the other paraphrase. Letter-writing in the mother tongue has the advantage over more formal kinds of composition in

that writing a letter is an achievement that appeals to a parent and is, indeed, sometimes taught more or less informally at home. It has thus a homely association, and because it demands rather less in the way of ordered arrangement, and draws on more intimate and personal subject-matter than the more formal essay to which pupils have been accustomed, it provides the pupil in the vernacular a congenial and easy passage way to harder and more exacting forms of composition. In the case of the foreign language, English, this advantage scarcely applies; for the pupil has advanced to other forms of composition in the vernacular by the time he is capable of writing letters in English, and a letter in a foreign language has a less homely appeal than a letter in the mother tongue. It is altogether a more artificial affair. The practice of setting pupils to write letters in English is thus without this justification, and as a general training in written composition should be given up, if only for the reason that it encourages the very indulgence in random expression of thought that it is the teacher's business to counteract. But this does not exclude from the teacher's duties that of *habituating the pupil to the common forms of English correspondence*, which they will be expected to observe when they come to write letters in English as college students, clerks in offices, or in other walks in life. But for this purpose it is not necessary to go beyond direction and practice in the English conventions. The letters written should be the briefest that will serve this purpose—to write at length is to diverge from the object in view.

Besides observing the English conventions as regards the writer's address, the date, and the opening and closing salutations and signature, *there should also be practice in addressing envelopes*, and if it is desired to familiarize the pupil with the difference in the tone of an English and an Indian letter, with the comparative restraint in emotional expression and in polite ceremony which marks the ordinary English private correspondence, samples of letters in English and vernacular may be compared. But it is a question whether the Indian pupil should be expected to take over the English manner with the English language in his private correspondence.



The parts of a letter which require special attention are the opening and closing salutations, when, for example, to use 'Sir', 'Dear Sir', 'Dear Sirs', 'My dear Mohan Lal', etc., but especially the endings 'Yours truly', 'Yours faithfully', 'Yours sincerely', 'Yours very sincerely', 'Your affectionate brother', and so on. For it is in these that variety is greatest. The styles, and opening and concluding salutations, of a few common types of letter of an official or more formal character should be known—to a college principal, or an official superior, as well as to a tradesman or a business firm.

### *Paraphrase*

The other type of written exercise to which tradition attaches undue school (and examination) prominence is paraphrase, in the sense of a written reproduction of a given continuous passage in the same language, by changing the words but keeping the sense. Whatever be the special merits of this exercise in teaching a vernacular (in the writer's opinion they are overestimated), *in teaching English paraphrase is out of place*. The paraphrase was originally introduced into the class-room as an expedient for discovering how much of another's thoughts the reader had made his own. In teaching a vernacular this argument on its behalf is plausible enough, for there is no easier medium into which to render the original than the vernacular itself. But with a foreign language for that very reason the way to test a pupil's comprehension of a passage is not to render it again in English but in his vernacular, in other words (as has already been stated), to translate.

But even as an expedient in teaching a vernacular 'all recent writers', to quote an up-to-date authority, 'have united to discredit it.' For 'even in this capacity it was far from satisfactory, for it is one thing to assimilate a writer's thoughts, and quite another to show written proof that you have done so.'<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase may indeed actually mislead the teacher into believing that the pupil has assimilated the thought, when he has

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Tomkinson, p. 150.

not done so, but has only repeated the expressions in other words, without really grasping the general purport. Clearly, then, in the case of English paraphrase used for this purpose it is not only gratuitous but ineffectual. Beaten on their original ground the defenders of paraphrase sometimes advocate its retention as a means of testing the wealth of the pupil's vocabulary. In the case of a foreign language, however, the simplest way of testing his working vocabulary (and that is the only vocabulary he requires in his own writing) is by translation from the vernacular into English, as has been fully explained already.

The Indian school tradition of paraphrase is an instance of an unthinking transference to the teaching of English in India of methods once approved for the teaching of English in England, without remembering that English in India is a foreign language.

But though paraphrase of the traditional type has no claim to a place in our class-rooms, a certain exercise akin to it (call it a modified form of paraphrase) may be used for a special purpose. Such is the conversion of selected phrases or expressions deliberately couched in written formal or elaborate English into common synonyms that the pupil should have at his finger's ends; e.g., 'In the Punjab (1) *the temperature rises* in April and May, but (2) *in the latter half* of June (3) *the rainy season* (4) *supervenes*, etc.'

A pupil adept in the common English idiom should be able to convert the italicized passages without difficulty. (1) It gets hot, (2) towards the end of June (3) the rains (4) set in.

This is a simple and effectual means of testing by the same exercise the pupil's recognition and application vocabulary.

Exercises in the conversion of whole passages from one style to another are scarcely within the scope of the school teaching of English.

### *Correction*

The great drawback of the pupil's written exercise to the teacher is that it entails time and trouble in

correction; while, as he knows, errors that go uncorrected are apt to become (or remain) habitual.

As regards the manner of correction, the first thing to remember is that the pupil must (eventually if not primarily) correct himself. Teachers who merely pepper their pupil's exercises with entries (usually in red ink) of the correct form over the mistake are ordinarily thinking more of impressing the inspector than of teaching their pupils English. *A correction which is not impressed upon the offender just wastes time*; and the most impressive kind of correction is one in which the pupil finds out the correct form for himself and then enters it in his exercise-book, and commits it to memory.

The teacher's first duty, then, is to draw the pupil's attention to the existence, and as further guidance, to the kind of the mistake. This can be done by a system of signs to the meanings of which the pupil soon grows accustomed. These signs should be easy to make and clear to read, indicative of the commonest forms of error, not so many as to trouble the memory or so few as to miss any common class of error, and as far as possible self-explanatory. Also they should be uniform throughout the school, though all need not be employed in the earliest school classes. A sample set is as follows:—

*Correction Symbols for School Written Work*

- S = Spelling error.
- Λ = Omission.
- E = Bad English.
- G = Bad Grammar.
- ? = Truth of statement questioned.
- ! = Exaggeration or Bombast.
- P = Punctuation wrong.
- O = Omit.
- Z = Irrelevance.

Example:—

- S His english was quite
- E difficult for hearing what to mention under-  
standing. The feelings of Λ poor
- S students who were oblidged to attend.
- O to his lectures can be better imagined.

than described. I ask you  
that whether you shall not join with  
me and address to the principle a petition,  
for does not listening to him drive you and  
I quite mad P

A donkey is a small kind of horse.

An objection brought against the use of mere symbols is that though they indicate the presence of an error, they do not indicate the actual correction. The pupil is thus left in doubt and in attempting to correct may merely substitute one error for another. In practice, however, to indicate the class of error is usually sufficient to recall to the pupil the correct form, for errors are due to lapse of memory; and co-operation between pupils should be encouraged, the better helping the worse. But *individual self-correction should always be supplemented by the teacher's periodical inspection of the pupil's exercise-book*, in which one side or a broad margin for each page of the written exercise should be reserved for corrections, written clearly that the teacher may see them at a glance.

There is, of course, in this method the danger that some mistakes will be wrongly corrected in the first instance, and the only way to insure against this is for the teacher to enter all the corrections himself. But apart from the failure by this method of bringing his error home to the pupil, the ordinary teacher has not the necessary time.

The self-correction method, though not ideal in execution, has a big advantage over the other.

Economy and effectiveness in correction may be promoted in other ways as well—

(a) *Typical common errors should be reserved for special treatment with the whole class or class-section.*

(b) The class can be split into sections for periodical individual correction and inspection of exercise-books by the teacher. It is an advantage here if the pupil does not know when his turn is coming—the grouping for this purpose need not be announced, so long as the teacher secures that every pupil has his due of supervision.

(c) Individual pupils should write out several times and memorize the correct forms of their own serious or repeated errors, where this can be easily done (as with spelling mistakes, some grammatical errors, wrong prepositional uses, etc.).

(d) The care of exercise-books and the pupil's carefulness in self-corrections should be specially considered, and may receive a mark, at the termly tests of progress and when deciding class promotion.

### *Briefer Written Exercises*

So far in this chapter we have been considering written exercises in the form of continuous compositions of some length. But there are also brief exercises useful for practising, impressing, and testing acquaintance with English usages, which have already been taught orally in the intensive lesson. These usages may be either particular, or general grammatical habits. Amongst the latter are the English conventions for direct and indirect speech, and tense sequence; amongst the former prepositional uses, often with verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and a host of others, that need separate teaching and practice. As the pupil accumulates these from his reading, oral practice of them should be checked by using them in writing, first in special sentences, to be afterwards embodied in his continuous compositions. *At no time in the high stage should this kind of special short sentence written practice be given up.*

### *Punctuation*

A word or two in conclusion on the teaching of English punctuation. At present too little systematic attention is given to this in our Indian schools. The simplest plan is to direct the pupil's attention to the stops used in the text of the reader, first to the full stop and the comma, later to the question mark, the semi-colon, and the colon.

English punctuation usages offer good material for inductive lessons, in which the pupil attempts to formulate provisional working rules from examination of many

examples in the text. Punctuation is an exception to the general principle of language teaching that usage should be assimilated unconsciously as far as possible ; for the use of the punctuation marks is confined to writing, and a deliberate application of rules is no impediment to the written expression of the thought. The stops are a guide to the reader, not for the writer who has his pauses in mind before and as he writes. And though a few pupils pick up of themselves the right use of stops, this is not true of the majority, who can learn their use best by having clear rules to go by in the first instance.

The inductive lessons should take advantage of similarities and contrasts in the vernacular, and special practice should be given in the correct use of inverted commas and the question mark. *Omitting the question mark is a common error frequently ignored by teachers in Indian schools.* It is perhaps wiser to discourage the average school pupil from the use of the dash. Wrong punctuation should be vigilantly noted in correcting written work.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

*The lack of a clear distinction between the teaching of language and the teaching of literature has led to a persistent confusion of the two in school, as in college teaching, with much harm and hindrance to the pupil's progress in both directions.*

#### *Teaching Literary Appreciation*

The teaching of literature, to be of value to the pupil, means the introduction of the pupil to the best in thought and expression in the language, his appreciation of the nobility and beauty of what he reads, and the cultivation of the power of appreciation to a higher degree. What he reads must touch his life, not only in the sense that it treats of his interests but in the deeper sense that it arouses in him emotions of satisfaction and of joy in what he somehow realizes to be beautiful and fitting, and in so doing keeps turning his soul and his aspirations to what in human life is most alive, most permanent, most fundamental. *Literature is an introduction to the soul of man through the medium of words.* It is an illumination, a voyage of discovery, a direct investigation of human truths just as science is an investigation of material or physical facts that serve humanity.

The chief difficulty of teaching literature in schools is the teacher's difficulty in comprehending and sustaining this conception, and the next difficulty is that of interpreting it in terms of the pupil, the time-table, and the class-room. Teachers or would-be teachers who do not "appreciate English literature" themselves, who are not keenly conscious, that is to say, of delight in the beauty and satisfaction in the truth of anything that they have read or listened to in English, should make

no attempt to teach literature to their pupils, but should limit themselves sternly to the teaching of language which has been the subject of our previous chapters, because they may be quite certain that pupils will gain nothing by receiving from their teacher what he has not to give, and will be merely mocked by a pretence. The distaste for English literature which pupils acquire in school life is, of course, not a distaste for literature at all; it is merely indignation at a hoax: of literature they have tasted nothing. A distaste for literature is a contradiction in terms, for literature is the delightful, presented in delightful words. The persistent distaste for literature amongst Indian schoolboys is the outcome of a task laid upon the teacher which is beyond his strength, and the nature of which he does not understand. 'If', write the recent Committee on the Teaching of English in England, 'we have to commit the guidance of youth to teachers, who, in default of the necessary insight and enthusiasm, will fall back upon conventional appreciations, historical details and the minute examination of words and phrases, we shall repeat the failure of the past upon a wider and more serious scale!'<sup>1</sup> And again:

'The teacher for whom poetry has no message should not attempt to take it with a class, unless, perhaps, he can catch from the children themselves some of their freshness for a ballad or a play.'<sup>2</sup>

### *Dangers in Unreal Teaching of Literature*

In another place:

'It is fatal to make literature a mere knowledge subject—to concentrate on the getting up of the actual subject-matter or of elaborate annotations, and equally fatal to substitute for it a mere impression of literary history.'<sup>3</sup> Further:

'Nothing is more likely to destroy the interest of boys and girls in literature than to burden their memory

<sup>1</sup> *The Teaching of English in England*, p. 16. (H. M.'s Stationery Office. 1s. 6d.)

<sup>2</sup> p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> p. 117.



with the names of authors and the titles of works which they have never read.<sup>1</sup>

The dislike which some pupils feel for literature may well result 'when literature is taught by the wrong person, one who substitutes for what children like something which he does not care for himself, and which consequently he cannot help them to care for.'<sup>2</sup>

These are comments, be it noted, passed by a committee of selected teachers, educationists, and writers of literature in England, and drawn from them by their experience of the state of literature teaching in a great number of English schools, *where*—and this point is important—*the teaching of literature is in the mother tongue*, the tongue most familiar to the pupils. We may be quite certain, then, that where the medium for introducing the pupils to literature is a tongue foreign to both pupils and teachers, the results of the attempt to do so are at least equally serious.

Instead of an analysis of the present situation in India perhaps a more useful service which can be rendered in a book on the teaching of English intended primarily to assist teachers is to base upon current practice a number of 'Don'ts', and then to consider a positive policy in the school whereby the teacher of English can best prepare the pupils for such appreciation of the good things written and spoken in English as they may be capable of when their time comes.

### *Important Cautions*

Here, then, is a list of cautions for the school-room :—

(1) *Do not teach poems which you do not yourself appreciate.* If you meet such in the reader or poetry selection book for your class, leave them out. If you meet none for which you have a genuine liking, make no attempt to teach any as poetry, but let any pupil who cares to read or learn any for which he cares. Impose nothing.

<sup>1</sup> p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> p. 84.

There is an exception to this rule. Verses which interest pupils (e.g., by their story or incident) and at the same time are couched in common daily English, there is probably no harm in treating *linguistically*, like the ordinary prose passages in the reader, that is, either cursorily, for the interest of the story, or intensively, for improving the pupil's vocabulary. But usually simple prose serves these objects, certainly the second object, better.

Poetry, and literary prose, which has much English that is not for the pupil's daily use, never treat intensively; but where they are likely or known to interest Indian pupils of the age of your class, any literary merit they possess is so much additional reason for including them in your course of cursory reading.

But even here, *books written in a quaint, or archaic, or difficult, or strange style, had better be avoided altogether.* Under this rule, for example, *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare* is unsuitable, *Robinson Crusoe* suitable for cursory treatment in class.

(2) Where you have a genuine liking for a poem or prose work of literary merit, and appreciate its literary merits, only teach it to your pupils if you can help them *to feel* its beauty or truth also.

The ability to communicate *genuine* appreciation of *English* literature in *Indian* pupils *at the school stage* is, however, rare, and the range of English literary matter within their experience and understanding very limited. Success is rare enough with English pupils learning in their mother tongue. While failure in this when teaching English to Indian pupils is worse than waste of time, for it is diverting time, ill spared from teaching them language, to no purpose.

Methods of study specially designed to bring to birth the power of literary appreciation cannot in any case be embodied as part of the English course in schools, and would be ineffectual if they were. *The special approach to literature should be made through the vernacular or not at all.* But there are also indirect approaches, through methods adapted to the teaching of English as language. These will be mentioned later. Teachers interested in ascertaining the special methods of teaching literature

as such may consult books on the subject.<sup>1</sup> In a book on the teaching of English in India at the school stage they need not be discussed.

Good reading aloud by the teacher is one indispensable condition of success ; and the teacher must at least be certain that he can render adequately the passage he is teaching.

(3) *Never confuse the learning of minutiae of language, or mere explanations of meanings or of literary or historical allusions, or a grammatical treatment of a passage, or a learning of the subject-matter, with the teaching of literature.* All these devices may be employed without kindling a spark of appreciation in the pupil. And none of these devices should be employed for its own sake, but each of them may be employed on occasion where and as they clearly serve one of your main objects in teaching English. Otherwise leave them alone.

### *Teaching a Poem*

In introducing pupils to an English poem which you feel to be worth their learning and which they are likely to enjoy, some trouble can be taken to put them in the right mood for it first, e.g., by explaining its 'motif' or dwelling on the circumstances of its writing. The following example of an introduction by way of reading will suggest the way in which this may be done equally well orally by the teacher :—

### CHARLES'S WAIN<sup>2</sup>

To-day I want you to try to understand, with my help, a pretty poem written by an Englishman, who spent

<sup>1</sup> These are worth consulting :

*The Teaching of English*, W. S. Tomkinson.

*The Teaching of Appreciation*, N. Catty.

*Expression in Speech and Writing*, Greening Lamborn.

*Training in Literary Appreciation*, F. H. Pritchard.

*The Teaching of English Literature*, W. McPherson.

The problem is presented to the Indian teacher of adapting to the particular vernacular and the circumstances of the schools in his area many excellent suggestions for the teaching of English literature to English children found in these books.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *The New Method Indian Readers*, Book IV, page 244, published by R. S. M. Gulab Singh & Sons, Lahore, Punjab.

many years of his life in India, and was Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces about thirty years ago. He speaks from India and addresses his little daughter in England. He wants her to understand how the stars may be a connecting link between them, and that the same constellations which she sees over her head in the West are also shining over him in the East, and may serve to remind them of one another. The constellation he dwells upon is called Charles's Wain (wain is another name of wagon), but another, and perhaps more usual name for this constellation is, The Great Bear. You remember, don't you, our explanation of the North Pole, and how we ran a pencil through an orange and so discovered where the North Pole would be; if you were to lengthen this pencil on and up into the sky you would presently come to a star, which goes by the name of the Pole Star. As Commander Peary stood at the North Pole, this star must have been directly over his head. Quite near to it is Charles's Wain, a constellation of seven bright stars, which appear, owing to the movement of the earth, to move during the night right round the Pole Star. Sir Alfred Lyall tells how these stars guide him at night to his tent, and when he wakes in the morning and sees them low on the horizon, he knows it is time to get up and start the day's work. He contrasts the bustling, noisy life of Western countries, with its chiming clocks and rushing trains, with the simple Eastern life, where people tell the time by the stars.

In the early spring as the nights grow shorter,  
Some clear cold eve, when the clouds are high,  
Just as you're going to bed, my daughter,  
Linger, and look at the northern sky;

There you will see, if the stars you're wise in,  
Over the edge of the darkened plain,  
One by one in the heavens uprising,  
The seven bright beacons of Charles's Wain.

All the night long you may watch them turning,  
Round in their course by the Polar star;  
Slowly they sink and at dawn are burning  
Low on the line of the world afar.

Often they guide me, by dim tracks wending,  
 In the evenings late, to an Indian tent,  
 Or the stars, as I wake, are to earth descending.  
 Just as they touch it the night is spent.

Then as they dip I may take their warning,  
 Saddle and ride in the silent air ;  
 Swiftly they vanish and cometh the morning,  
 Cometh the day with its noise and glare.

But the Wain's last lustre fitfully glances  
 O'er shadowy camels who softly pace,  
 On the watchman's fire, and the horseman's lances,  
 Or a wayside mere with a still wan face.

Thus when you look at the seven stars yonder  
 Think, nor in years that will come forget,  
 Here in the dark how often I wander,  
 Sleep when they rise, and start when they set.

In the West there is clanging of clocks from the  
 steeple,  
 Ringing of bells and rushing of train ;  
 In the East the journeys of simple people  
 Are timed and lighted by Charles's Wain.

SIR ALFRED LYALL.

### *The Path to Literature through Language*

We may now turn to the indirect methods of approach to English literature through the teaching of the English language in the high school. At the beginning of this chapter the importance was stressed of keeping a clear distinction between teaching English as literature and English as language, because the use for linguistic teaching of books chosen for their suitability as literature though unsuitable for teaching language, resulted in hindering progress in both directions. It is now time to supplement our statement of the distinction by adding that in the teaching of language and the teaching of literature the processes in each case differ, yet contribute a measure

of assistance to one another. No teacher can teach literary appreciation successfully without increasing the pupil's command of language, only he may not increase it to the same extent or in as useful ways as through lessons directed to that particular object. And conversely some acquaintance with and power over language is clearly a condition of appreciating its use by others. I must at least know the language whose literature I hope to enjoy. It follows that in teaching the pupil to speak and write English and to read it with understanding, the teacher is putting his pupil in the way to enter the more special domain of literature, and indeed that without this preparation he cannot hope to enter it at all. If, then, the methods of acquiring English advocated in previous chapters of this book are sound methods, the economies effected by adopting them will serve to shorten the pupil's approach to higher things—literary appreciation being one of them. And neither the teacher in the school, nor the University professor to whom he passes the pupil on, need deplore the dearth of direct literature teaching at the school stage, when the time is taken up in laying its foundations sure. The difficulty at present is that attempts are prematurely made to build on sand.

The reader will appreciate the point more fully, and the prospective teacher will appraise his own responsibilities more justly, if I conclude this chapter by instancing two or three ways in which effective teaching of the English language is preparing the pupil for literary pursuits. *Literary interest has three aspects*, of which one or other is often uppermost in the attention of the reader according to his personal bias and the special characteristics of his author. *We may distinguish these as interest in the matter, interest in the manner, and interest in the man.* The methods of teaching English which have been set before the reader in this book can prepare the pupil along all three lines. The interest that appeals earliest to the growing child is interest in the manner, and not, as is sometimes assumed, in the matter of what is told him. This is shown by the pleasure he takes in nursery rhymes, in cradle songs, and repetitions of simple musical sounds. This pleasure is instinctive: it begins without training.

But if his mother, nurse, or infant teacher fail to seize and develop it it may fade prematurely away, to be called back to life, if at all, with difficulty later, when it might have been cherished and sustained from infancy.

### *Interest in Reading*

Be the reason what it may, by the time they come to begin English most children in our Indian schools have lost contact with the beauty of words, and are no longer alive to seize in English what has not been presented them in the vernacular. But they have also reached an age where interest in matter has supervened, if it has not superseded the former. The preliminary cultivation of this interest in the matter of English literature is provided for in the lessons on the cursory readers, and in the introduction through these lessons to the independent reading of suitable books in the school or class library. To be sure, it is somewhat venturesome to dignify this interest as literary, for it is often of that sensuous or even sensational order which the true lover of literature condemns, but the point we are making here is that in teaching English we are preparing the pupil for an interest to awaken in him later, not that what he reads already is of the highest literary order. Pleasure in incident and adventure and romance, in a thrilling story for the story's sake, in tales of achievement, of wonderful inventions and discoveries, of the possible in imagination though impossible in present fact, this, if we can get the pupils to take it, is the best prelude for their years to that deeper and to us more abiding interest in the vicissitudes and adventures of the human soul to which the pupil may eventually grow through his own advance in experience and thought and feeling, but can never attain by direct teaching before his time. When, therefore, the teacher of English successfully introduces his pupils to the pleasures of reading, and when they can take to English reading with pleasure of their own accord, linguistic though his primary purpose has been, and rightly, he may yet be satisfied that he is opening one channel of approach to English literature as understood by those older and wiser among us who sometimes forget our years of little things.

Nor need the teacher of English leave out of count the steps he takes to prepare for an interest in manner, or, as we may now call it, for appreciation of style. To appreciate style is to delight in the fitness of word and sound to convey the meaning of the author.

### *Cultivating an Ear*

The power of discrimination of sounds and of words prepares for this, and is essential for its full and fine development. The methods of language study described in the previous chapters contribute largely to the training of these powers. For example, the principle has been advocated of introducing the beginner to the sounds of words before he utters them or sees them in writing, of teaching sounds deliberately and systematically and, where helpful, through contrast with vernacular sounds with which they might otherwise be confused, of accustoming pupils to the intonation of English spoken in sentences, and of making full use of any training in phonetics which the teacher may possess. The habit of listening for sound, (not only for meaning), and of care in pronunciation, is thus inculcated early, and thus is begun that cultivation of a good ear which is one constituent in the appreciation of literary style, in prose and poetry.

### *Cultivating a Sense for Words*

But the teacher also plays his part in teaching his pupil to discriminate between words. *For literary appreciation there is required a sense not only of the meaning of words but of what we may call their atmosphere.* In any language, even in the mother tongues, both these senses can only grow up slowly. The sense of the shades of meaning which a word can bear, of the kind of contexts in which it may or may not be used, of the moods to which it responds, is a sense that develops by reiterated meeting with that word in its varying moods and significances, and develops largely unconsciously. The skilled introduction of the pupil to independent reading is at the same time his introduction to a wider circle of language



and a repetition of his familiar vocabulary in a variety of settings according to the extent and variety of what he reads. But unconscious progress towards literature may be more deliberately assisted. This assistance the teacher of English gives when he calls for contrasts in synonyms, or points out the differences between an English word and its nearest vernacular equivalents, or again when in teaching composition he leads the pupil to realize the importance of choice and order, and to exercise his judgment in performance accordingly.

But every teacher must beware of expecting too nice discrimination before its time, and no teacher can go beyond his own knowledge of the language. For these reasons it is useless to push this kind of literary preparation too far.

### *Interest in the Writer's Personality*

Lastly, there is the approach to literature through interest in the man, that is, in the personality of the author. With certain kinds of literature it is the revelation through his writing of a unique or fascinating personality that especially attracts the reader. But, apart from this, some preliminary acquaintance with the man or with his topic in the particular circumstances of his time and place may throw a guiding light upon the matter or manner of his writing. Interest of the former kind does not come into the purview of the school; but of the help available from the latter a brief example has already been given in this chapter; and the same general principle governs the recommendations made elsewhere regarding the explanations about English life and customs that should form a part of the later intensive readers and the preparation of the pupil for supplementary independent reading by previous talk on the particular topic where this is unfamiliar.

From instances given above will be understood how a road may be cleared to literature through the efficient teaching of language; and the teacher who is busy in clearing it should not be beguiled into taking short cuts that lead only to will-o'-the-wisps. The general failure to interest the school pupil in English literature hitherto

has been due to two causes in particular. One is that too much is expected of him before his time. And the employment of wrong methods of introducing him to literature is the other. The teacher who would save his child for literature must begin by saving him from both these evils.

## CHAPTER XII

### SPELLING AND HANDWRITING

#### *Spelling*

ENGLISH spelling is a conventional nuisance, but so long as the convention remains of reckoning conformance to standard a mark of the educated adult, teachers who respect this convention must take the trouble to secure conformance in their pupils.

English pupils learning English as a vernacular pick up spelling from reading and imitation as they go along, and good spelling then associates itself with that observant and careful reading and writing which is the habit of the *linguistically* educated man. With Indian pupils learning English as a foreign language the case is otherwise: the spelling of the ordinary pupil as he leaves the high school is bad, and if excellence in spelling beyond a mere standard of general intelligibility is worth aiming at, it can be attained only by adopting measures for the purpose.

#### *What to Learn*

With few exceptions it is for writing only that accuracy in spelling matters. It makes no difference to your *hearer* how you spell your words in your mind so long as you sound them correctly, but their wrong shapes in writing may mislead him or offend his eye. From this follows one principle of economy, that only words in the working vocabulary, that is, words he has heard and seen and will use in writing, need the pupil learn to spell at all. *Spelling practice should be only of words already familiar*, and should follow not precede that familiarity. This point is often at present ignored, by teachers who waste time at the beginning of a new lesson in the

reader, in teaching the spelling of the new words. They may profitably relieve themselves of the trouble.

### *Special Devices*

To secure good, or forestall bad, spelling from the outset the teacher should insist on the pupil's transcribing faithfully : persistence and insistence here can gain its end, for accuracy in transcription is within every normal pupil's power, and it is a habit that spreads to his reading and writing also. As free composition begins spelling mistakes always occur, for the pupil writes from memory not from sight of the words. The error being indicated by the uniform symbol, the pupil should write out the correct form four or five times and if it still worries him can add it to his private list of spelling 'demons', or special spelling traps which every pupil should compile for himself, and run his eye down the first thing every morning.

Besides this the teacher can have his list of errors common in his class, and post them publicly in large letters, and try them on his class at regular intervals.

A separate list for the whole school is not worth while. Pairs of difficult words identically or similarly sounded should be practised in contrast, and *in sentences* ; for it is no good to know they are differently spelt unless you know which word has which meaning attached to it. Examples are affect and effect, principal and principle, precede and proceed, practice and practise, prophesy and prophecy, dual and duel, two, too and to (they are sometimes trios), week and weak, bare and bear. There are many others.

There is no need for the sake of spelling to keep the early primer or reader to words of so-called regular formation. A 'say-and-look' method will suffice for introducing a pupil to the many irregular words that are common enough to claim an early place in his vocabulary.

It will assist spelling if common irregular words appear in sentences which he practises for handwriting. The spelling game may also be introduced for the pupils' leisure amusement, if they take to it.

Every pupil should have a short dictionary for reference.

*Handwriting*

Handwriting should be clear but characteristic, and yet sufficiently rapid in execution.

The bad and illegible writing of many educated Englishmen is due to insufficient care of handwriting in childhood or to deterioration from rapidity, in a busy life, outpacing care, with a consequent slurring of the letter form ; or possibly to both causes.

If a pupil has been properly taught handwriting in a vernacular, and begins English at 10 or 11 years of age, his hand and eye are sufficiently accustomed to small letters and movements to render a beginning with copies of a size suitable for an English infant unnecessary.

The ideal is to dispense with a printed copy, if the teacher's own pattern is good enough, when he can demonstrate at will on the blackboard according to requirements. Many teachers have not this skill, however, and must resort to a published set of copies.

*Choice of Style*

Until lately the form most generally approved has been one in which the letters slope slightly from the right (a semi-vertical, as it is called), are plain without flourishes, distinguish clearly the broad downward from the thin upward or connecting stroke, and run on to the next letter without necessitating a lift of the pen off the paper. If the ordinary script is retained, these conditions are worth observing. More recently, however, a form of letters like that used in print has become fashionable in England for beginners to start on, the claims being made that the resultant handwriting is clearer and equally rapid in execution, the child soon getting used to the tiny lift of the pen entailed in passing from one letter to another. Not enough experiments have yet been undertaken to place the claim for superiority beyond doubt, and though some appear to corroborate it, educationists are not perhaps yet generally so convinced as to justify a sweeping change being advocated for India.

Trials, however, might well be made, for, apart from any inherent superiority, to save the Indian pupil learning two sets of letter forms is so much gain.

An important point in training the pupil to a good style of writing is to insist on legibility in all his written work, and to *judge his progress not by special calligraphy exercises but by his normal handwriting*. Also in the early stages he should be led to see for himself his mistakes and to make his own corrections, and not to have them made for him over his copy by the teacher. The reasons for the error (e.g., under-pressure of the pen here, the wrong posture there, and so on) should also be made clear to him. There is no need to insist on his sitting square to his desk with his paper edge parallel to the desk's edge fronting him, a comfortable slope serves just as well.

Pupils who become slovenly as they pass up the school may be given special writing exercises, and be made to rewrite what is carelessly written.

Individuality of handwriting may be allowed to develop freely, so long as speed and legibility are not sacrificed. Indulgence in elaborations and flourishes are a sign of youth finding its way to a style of its own. They should be treated on the merits of the case.

Much pencil work and rough scribble impedes the formation of a clear hand.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

IN the chapter on the Direct Method the principle was propounded that as far as is conveniently practicable the medium of instruction in the lesson in English should be English, and the vernacular should be avoided.

The practice is old-established in Indian schools of employing English as a medium of instruction in subjects other than English—geography, mathematics, science—but has of recent years been losing popular favour, and its use is now generally restricted to the higher classes.

In the old days the lack of text-books in the Indian vernaculars supplied a reason for a resort to English, but with an increasing output of vernacular text-books, the reason is ceasing to apply, at any rate, for middle or junior school classes. But the retention of English as a medium still has many defenders, and as the teaching of English is affected by its use as a medium in other subjects, it is worth while attempting to weigh the pros and cons of the case.

#### *On Behalf of English as Medium*

On behalf of the retainers it is claimed that—

(a) English serves as a kind of *lingua franca* in school and where subjects are taught through other mediums, the question inevitably arises which medium is it to be, and various vernaculars assert their claims. The spectacle is then witnessed of either one vernacular predominating, with injustice to communities represented by others, or of different media existing side by side, with the consequent expense of multiplying staff and text-books, and difficulties in arranging the time-table or finding simultaneous accommodation for class sections.

(b) Each subject has its English technical terminology, and this terminology lacks suitable equivalents in

vernaculars, so that it is simpler to teach the subject in English, especially in the higher parts of a school where technical terms are more numerous. Further, if vernacular equivalents for these terms were invented, to teach them to a pupil would be just as difficult as teaching him the English terms, and would double his labour if he made a higher study of the subject in English at the University stage.

(c) English itself is a language of such importance that every opportunity should be seized of giving the pupil practice in it. To use it as a medium in other subjects provides that opportunity: he thereby learns to speak, hear and write it incidentally.

Considering the present low standard of English attainment in the ordinary matriculate admitted to a college, the loss of practice in English from the abandonment of English as a medium would mean a grave setback to the student's University studies.

### *Against English as Medium*

Answers are forthcoming to each of these three contentions. To the first it is replied that in all larger centres of population schools exist representative of the various communities, and that, therefore, it is unnecessary to have more than one vernacular in any one school. Hence the difficulty need arise only in small towns, and in this case a single vernacular satisfies the great majority, while it is open to the dissatisfied few to board in other schools. In any case, a general change of policy is not defensible for the sake of a few.

To the second argument the reply can be made that English technical terms can be transferred *transliterated* to the vernaculars in need of them, that the abandonment of English for vernaculars as a medium will lead to an enrichment of the vernaculars by those terms, and that thus a duplication at the University stage will also be saved. And that in any case the technical vocabulary required at the high school stage is not so large as to constitute a substantial addition to the pupil's work, and some of it will already have been learnt in the middle stage.



The third argument is demolished by the verdict of experienced teachers and headmasters that the use of English as a medium hampers progress both in English and in subjects taught through English; in English, because the teachers of other subjects are not so much concerned in improving the pupils' English as in teaching their own subjects, and thus allow numerous errors in English to become habitual or leave it to the teacher of English to undo the harm; and in subjects taught through English, because, in consequence of the difficulty of the medium, the pupil either masters the matter more slowly, or memorizes the words of the book. At the best the pupil's English loses as much in accuracy as it gains in fluency or increased vocabulary, while in his other subjects his progress is hampered. Thus the use of a vernacular medium is claimed as a condition of progress in all subjects excluding English itself.

The advantage is also adduced of the stimulus thus given to the development of vernacular school literature and the improvement in the pupil's vernacular, through his use of it in most of his lessons. One of the obstacles mentioned in this book in the way of the efficient teaching of English is the insufficient mastery of the vernacular. Thus the teaching of English may stand to gain in more ways than one through its abolition as a school medium for instruction in other subjects.

### *Bearing of the Question on Method in Teaching English*

Whatever be the balance of opinion on this controversial question, the important point for the teacher is the bearing of the use of English as a medium upon method in teaching English. Two practical considerations arise. One is that whatever the stage or subject in which English is introduced as a medium, the business of the teacher of English is so to adapt his teaching as to lighten the task of the pupil when he reaches that subject and stage. This he can do by modifying the pupil's working vocabulary accordingly, giving special lessons, say, in the preliminary year to introduce and practise the more essential parts of the vocabulary characteristic of that English medium used in the following year. He may even antici-

pate to some extent the subject-matter of the future lessons, with the difference, however, that he will be treating it as a lesson in language in order that the next year's teacher may treat it as a lesson in the subject concerned. But there is a limit to this diversion of the ordinary course in English: the pupil's general progress in English must not be sacrificed to particular ends.

Secondly, measures must be taken to safeguard the interests of the pupil's English in the subjects taught through English. This duty of co-ordination falls primarily to the headmaster.

His class-room supervision will now include a vigilant ear for carelessness of a teacher over his own and his pupils' English speech, and a vigilant eye for slackness over the English written work, and skill in associating, without distorting, the teaching in English and in the other subjects concerned, as, for example, by a due selection of topics for English composition from those treated in other subjects taught through English, and uniformity of symbolization and procedure in correcting errors in written work, or, again, by securing the assistance of the teacher of English for dealing with special language difficulties arising in the course of the other teaching. To maintain effective co-ordination requires, no doubt, a tactful headmaster and a harmonious staff. But, without it, the pupil's progress in English stands to suffer.

## CHAPTER XIV

### EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH

THE teacher who has studied the principles propounded in this book will no doubt find the acceptance of them qualified in practice by the counter-influence of a public examination; an influence which strengthens as the pupil goes up the school till in his final year it is predominant.

If, then, the teaching is to effect its purpose,—of teaching the pupil serviceable English—the examination, which is a passport to University and other careers, must co-operate and not conflict with the teacher in this endeavour.

#### *Character of the Public Examination*

Unfortunately this co-operation is not at present secured, and the anomaly exists of a public examination established to test a candidate's knowledge of English, thwarting the progress of the teaching because it tests something else. Be the teacher counselled never so wisely as to the principles which should govern his school teaching, he is always ready to confront his critics with the requirements of the public examination.

There are more reasons than one for this perversity of the public examination in India. Amongst them the more important are a persistent disharmony, unnecessary and harmful, between school and University ideals, which results partly from a common misconception of the possibilities, needs, and nature of the school pupil, and of the character of the English which should serve him best at the University stage; partly from the adoption of false and harmful aims for the English course at the University stage itself, in imitation of examples in England (where English is a mother tongue), irrespective of the real interests of school pupil and college student. The examination has thus assumed the function of

testing the candidate's preparedness for entering upon an unreasonable course of studies in the future which also disregards what can reasonably be expected of him in the past. Its function as testing his satisfactory attainment of practical and practicable aims in learning English at the school stage has thus escaped consideration.

### *Examination Economy*

Apart from the perversity of the examination as a test, it has two other grave disqualifications. The papers are often too long, and there is no stable objective standard of measurement. The custom of matriculation examiners is to set two papers that require six hours in the answering, so that every examiner has to estimate the output of six hours' labour of each candidate. Consider the time required for this in an examination with, say, 4,000 candidates, when the purpose could just as well be answered by one paper properly designed of two hours or two and a half hours. Indeed, better; for in India examiners are busy people who mark papers in spare time, and are now tempted to hasty assessments to get their work finished by the limit date allowed them.

Expense also would be saved on stationery, in vigilance, and on examiners.

The question of objective standards is too big to treat in this chapter. Meanwhile we may try to answer the question of the character required of a test of the pupil's attainments in English at the end of his high school career.

### *Objects of the Examination*

The test should measure the extent to which the aims of the teaching have been fulfilled. These were four in number :—

- (1) Ability to speak English.
- (2) Ability to understand spoken English.
- (3) Ability to read with understanding.
- (4) Ability to write correctly.

*Prima facie*, the first two abilities require an oral test. We will begin by confining ourselves to (3) and (4).

Ability to read with understanding emphatically does not mean ability to reproduce the memorized summaries or explanations of matter previously studied.

Our aim in teaching is to train the pupil to read with understanding matter written in English that he meets in ordinary life, *as he meets it*. 'Can he read English intelligently?' is the important question. And 'How far can he do so?', not 'Has he memorized what the teacher has put before him, specially prepared beforehand?' To test the memory of particular passages is off the point. Hence the examination must not be of particular matter specially studied beforehand, because in that case we cannot distinguish between the knowledge associated with that particular matter learnt and general ability to understand fresh matter. And no amount of ingenuity—short of deserting the specially studied matter altogether—can deliver us from the dilemma. *The test for intelligent reading must studiously avoid set books.*

### *Reading with Comprehension*

So much for a negative condition. Now for a positive. The purpose of the test is to measure the candidate's reading ability in English. In order to arrive at a measurement, the ideal method is to set before him unseen passages of graded difficulty to measure by. To measure a boy's capacity in jumping, we discover the greatest height or length that he can jump. In testing his ability in reading English we similarly want to know what is the most difficult passage he can successfully interpret. But we want to know more than this. for within a limited circle of vocabulary there are different regions where he should be at home. Our tests must, therefore, also be of his capacity to interpret passages written *in somewhat different vocabularies* of common English.

To fulfil both purposes three grades of difficulty are enough, to include both a passing standard at one end and a merit standard at the other; remembering also that quality shows in the answer on each of the passages,

for there are better and worse answers of questions of whatever difficulty. Variety and extent of recognition vocabulary can be supplementarily tested by very short passages or even single sentences calling for synonyms from within the *use* vocabulary of the candidate. Given, then, three passages of graded difficulty, the question arises of the best devices for testing the candidate's comprehension of them.

The simplest is translation into a vernacular, as has been explained in Chapter IX. But for reasons given in that chapter, it is perhaps wiser to avoid this method. A number of alternative devices are given below.

### *Writing Correctly*

The power to write correct English has two constituents:—

- (1) Command of a working vocabulary.
- (2) Power to compose or put together one's thoughts.

The second is a faculty which is not peculiar to the use of English and is not tested only by an examination on English. It should be first acquired in school in and through a vernacular, and it exhibits itself in all work in whatever subject where written answers of any length are called for. Hence a special additional test of it in the examination in English should have a subordinate place, for it is already being tested in other work, and affects the marking of the candidates in every case. *The practice of calling for a long essay in English may be discontinued.* This does not apply, however, to the candidate's command of a working vocabulary, for in subjects other than English where the English medium is used in answering, the vocabularies are those limited to the subject in question, and a great part of the vocabulary of daily use escapes examination. The best and simplest test of command of a working vocabulary is translation into English from a familiar vernacular, of short passages varying in topic and degree of difficulty. If, however, translation be avoided for reasons already given in Chapter IX, a number of other expedients are open to the examiner. Some of these will be found on the list given below.

SUGGESTIVE LIST OF QUESTION TYPES FOR TESTS  
IN ENGLISH FOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

*Types of Question*

1. Short passages for translation into a vernacular.

(Two or three passages varied in vocabulary and graded in difficulty are in themselves an adequate test of comprehension and of the candidate's reading vocabulary.)

2. Précis or summarizing of a passage.

(This tests the power of getting to the essentials of what is read rather than the recognition vocabulary in detail. A candidate may manage a competent précis without being sure of all the English in it.)

3. Giving a passage, and setting questions entailing inferences from it.

Examples<sup>1</sup> are :—

(a) Aladdin's uncle said :—' I will take a shop and furnish it for you.' Aladdin was delighted with the idea, for he thought there was very little work in keeping a shop. He liked that better than anything else.

What kind of boy was Aladdin—industrious, ambitious, active, lazy, or honest ?

(b) In front the purple mountains were rising up, a distant wall. Cool snow gleamed on the summits. Our horses suffered bitterly for water. Five hours we had ridden through all that arid waste without a pause.

Through what kind of country had those people been riding—swampy, mountainous, forest, desert, or valley ?

(c) Out of the statements below, underline those which could not possibly be true, and explain why they could not be true :—

- (1) In England a man may marry his widow's sister, although a woman may not marry her dead husband's brother.

- (2) As evening came on, the sun hung like a ball of fire over the hills on our left, as we galloped rapidly northward.

<sup>1</sup> These examples are quoted from current Achievement tests now on the market.

- (3) His right arm hung useless, but, nothing daunted, he drew his sword with the left hand, while checking his horse by a sharp pull on the curb.
- (4) A rise both in wages and in the cost of living will occur when the natural resources of a country are not effectively exploited.
- (5) In spite of its faults, it is not impossible that, if it is adapted, the kinema may render valuable service to education.
4. Asking the effect of substitutions or alternatives, e.g., Distinguish in meaning between—
- (a) It was *nearly* 4 miles off.  
It was *about* 4 miles off.  
It was about 4 miles off *or more*.
- (b) I was *perplexed* by his question.  
I was *amazed* at his question.  
I was *bewildered* by his question.
- (c) I *missed* my dog yesterday.  
I *lost* my dog yesterday.
5. Calling for definitions or meanings, e.g.,
- (a) Give the meanings of the words underlined—  
He held me fast.  
Run as fast as you can.  
A fine day, a fine needle, a fine poem.
- (b) Distinguish between—  
Précède and proceed.  
Principal and principle.  
Stupid and foolish.  
Handsome and pretty.  
Mud and dirt.  
To falter and to stumble.  
To approach and to confront.

(Exercises under 4 and 5 directly test the candidate's recognition vocabulary.)

6. Writing a passage without conjunctives, and asking for these to be inserted, e.g.—

'The chrysalis does not take any food,—the butterfly sucks honey from flowers,—it does not grow any larger in spite of this food,—it is born from the chrysalis, except for its wings, full grown.'



7. Asking for an illustration of a principle or process described, e.g.—

‘In order to find out which questions were most, which least, difficult, at first the same mark was given to each. Then the marks obtained for each answer by all the candidates who took the corresponding question were added and the sum divided by the number of candidates who took it. By comparing the averages thus obtained for each question we could arrange the questions in order of actual difficulty.’

Read the passage carefully, and write another passage showing by an imaginary example that you understand it fully.

8. Converting less simple into simpler language, e.g.—

Rewrite as if you were explaining to your young brother in the simplest English the exact meaning of the following :—

‘The resources of the British Empire were placed at the disposal of Great Britain’s allies. When the Allies had obtained what they required for the preservation of their populations, the surplus was offered for sale to the neutral countries.’

(*N.B.*—Words new to the younger brother are resources, allies, at the disposal of, surplus, and neutral.)

9. Questions to test ability to write English, e.g., short passages for translation into English from a vernacular.

(This tests the candidate’s working vocabulary. The passages should vary in vocabulary and degree of difficulty.)

10. Exercises in expansion of a theme or situation, e.g.—

(a) You receive the following telegram :—

‘Come at once. Father suddenly ill. Letter follows.’ Write that letter. (Not more than 100 words.)

(b) Scene. A village shop. A zamindar showing the shopman a hurricane lantern with its glass broken. He is clearly angry. Invent a conversation between them explaining the situation. (Not more than 100 words.)

(c) A neighbour’s son is caught by you stealing your lemons. Record the action you take.

## 11. Filling in blanks, e.g.—

(1) Use one of the following expressions (in its fitting tense and sense) in the blank spaces to show you understand how they are used, and give the meaning of each sentence thus completed.

Expressions:—‘make up for’, ‘make up’, ‘make for’, and ‘make up to’.

(a) Let us—our quarrel and be friends.

(b) He tried to—his crimes by living honestly.

(c) The teacher—his headmaster because he wanted leave.

(d) We—the nearest village at full speed.

(2) Write a story by filling in the gaps between the words below:—

The house—fire,—upsetting—upper storey. In spite of—burnt to death. The alarm—too late to—; but two children—about the hands and face—singed—on a stretcher—and—every attention—succumbed—

## 12. Imaginary dialogues:—

(An instance is given under 10 above. But this type of exercise is so valuable as a test in (1) punctuation, (2) the English or ordinary speech, as to claim a separate class to itself.)

13. Exercises in *descriptions of scenes*.14. Exercises in *explanations of processes*.

(Both types of exercise test not only working vocabulary but power of clear arrangement of subject-matter.)

Examples are:—

(a) A friend sends you a photograph of himself on his pony. Describe in about ten lines the picture in the photograph.

(b) Draw a rough diagram of a garden, and describe the garden by referring to the diagram.

(c) A stranger asks you the way from your school to the police station or to the hospital. Give him clear directions in less than ten lines.

## 15. Writing a story from different points of view, e.g.—

A boy aged 13 reads in a book of directions how to fold, address, stamp, and post a letter to England,

Write first the directions as they might be given in the book, secondly the boy's explanation of them to a younger brother.

(This exercise tests the candidate's working vocabulary in different styles.)

16. Exercises in the correction of incorrect English, e.g.—

Rewrite in correct idiomatic English:—

'I have the intention to proceed to Amritsar soon.'

'Here in Punjab there are two crops in every year.'

'I like to read better than to play games.'

'This young man is comparatively older than his brother.'

'I am fond of visiting my friend to-morrow.'

17. Exercises in the insertion of appropriate prepositions, e.g.—

Insert the proper prepositions in each of the following sentences:—

Take—your wet shoes and put—dry ones.

Can I depend—you to help me—this work?

I tried my luck—shooting.

I have settled—the thinner cloth—my coat, as more suitable—the season.

18. Exercises in converting direct into indirect speech and *vice versa*, in combining simple into complex sentences, in question forms, sequence of tenses.

19. Exercises in punctuation, by giving a passage to be punctuated.

As already claimed, by a judicious selection of questions an examiner can find out all that is necessary of a candidate's mastery of English (other than of his pronunciation and intonation), in a paper of two or two and a half hours, i.e., in about one-third of the time now expended per candidate.

A sample paper may be given.

Time—2 hours. Marks—100.

1. (a) In the Punjab *the temperature rises rapidly between March and June. In June the humidity of the atmosphere increases, and as a general rule the rainy season commences towards the latter part of that month.*

(b) *I retired to rest at twelve o'clock in the night.*

(c) He was only too glad *to depart from* the scene of horror.

(d) Instead of remaining *absolutely still*, he *commenced running in the direction* of his house.

Replace the words in italics by the simplest English of the same meaning.

2. What is the difference in meaning between—

(1) A lock and a key.

(2) A chair and a stool.

(3) A shrub and a tree.

(4) I had not heard that he had left, and  
I had not heard whether he had left.

3. Punctuate, putting in capitals where necessary :—

'He said to me I cannot see why you came here to-day my son and I are both ill he of malaria and I with a bad headache I told you to come in four five or six days' time yet you take no heed of my request but though I wrote to you more than once not to come you insist on visiting me to-day what made you choose so unfortunate a moment'

4. A short story is entitled 'How I found my long lost brother'. Invent five suitable chapter headings, and write a dialogue in the fourth chapter in which you and your brother meet again.

(The dialogue should not contain more than ten questions and ten answers.)

5. Read this and then write the answers to (1), (2), (3) and (4). Read it again if you need to.

'We often think of a rich man as one who has much money, as if money and wealth meant the same thing. However, money is only one sort of wealth and some money is not exactly wealth. A twenty-rupee bill, for example, is only someone's promise to pay so much cash. Wealth means land, houses, food, clothes, jewels, tools, gold, silver, coal, iron—anything that a man can have that satisfies some want. Money means something which a person can exchange for any one of many sorts of wealth. The main value of any piece of wealth, such as a barrel of flour, a house, or a cow is the direct use you can make of it. The value it has by reason of what you can exchange it for is of less importance. The

main value of any piece of money, such as a silver rupee, a ten-rupee bill, or an anna piece is *not* any direct use you can make of it. Its main value *is* by reason of what you can exchange it for.'

(1) In what does the main value of wealth lie, according to the paragraph?

(2) In what does the main value of money lie, according to the paragraph?

(3) Name something that is money but is not exactly wealth.

(4) What do you suppose is the thing which is defined by business men as 'a medium of exchange'?

6. 'Last night a vast concourse assembled to witness a disastrous conflagration which occurred in Thames Street. The destroying element extended its devastating career, until the entire edifice was consumed and its progress was not arrested until several other establishments in the immediate vicinity were also reduced to ashes.'

(a) Rewrite in simple English.

(b) Give a suitable title to the passage.

7. Fill in the blanks in the following :—

(a) I have settled—the thinner cloth—my coat, as more suitable—the season.

(b) If I———, I should not have had to repay him.

(c) Can I depend—you to help me—this work?

And use the most suitable of the expressions—'make up for', 'make up', 'make for', and 'make up to' in the blanks in—

(d) We had two rupees only but I—the number to five.

(e) You can—your offence only by hard work.

(f) The lion—the sportsman, who quickly fled.

(g) He—his mind to speak to the Director about his case.

8. Correct :—

(1) I asked that why is it wrong to lie.

(2) I wanted to find out that my pupils understood me or not.

(3) I did not used to visit him more than once a week.

---

The candidate's power to apply his vocabulary is tested in questions 1, 4 and 6, his recognition vocabulary in 1, 2, 5 and 6, his power of composition in 4, of punctuation both in other questions and in 3, and his grammatical ability both incidentally in 4 and 6, and specifically in 7 and 8. *A paper of this type not only tests all that is essential, and that in half the time of the customary type of examination, but the answers are such as to fill much less space and take much less time per answer in the marking.*

Besides this, knowledge of conversational English can be tested in the written paper, e.g., by giving part of a dialogue to be completed, or by defining a situation and requiring the candidate to compose a dialogue on it or by leaving blanks in a dialogue for him to fill in with suitable questions or answers. There is no need of a separate oral test for this purpose.

### *The Oral Test*

But two capacities remain untested by written examinations, viz., the ability to pronounce, and the ability to understand spoken English. For both these an oral test is requisite. For pronunciation it may be quite brief, the reading of two carefully selected short passages, one to measure intonation or the power of expressive reading, the other for mechanical accuracy of pronunciation. In a large province, however, such tests are difficult to arrange or standardize, and without uniformity of standard it is unfair to let marks count much in determining the result. Of ability to hear with understanding it is still more difficult to arrange a uniform test as this requires a longer time for each candidate. On the other hand, it is not likely that a candidate who does well in his paper examination will be seriously backward in pronunciation or in understanding the spoken language, and it might be a reasonable compromise to reserve the oral tests for candidates whose marks on their written papers placed them at or just above the passing line. With this minority uniformity of standard might be attainable. To omit an oral test altogether encourages schools in neglect of pronunciation and of the development of the power to interpret spoken English.

*Internal Examinations*

The principles which govern the external examinations the teacher should have no difficulty in applying to internal tests of progress in the school itself. Here oral tests can be more easily given their due place. They should figure in every annual examination, and may include such exercises as—

(a) Writing down the gist of a passage just spoken by the examiner.

(b) Carrying out a spoken direction.

(c) Answering questions arising from a passage just spoken.

(d) Reading aloud of

(1) A passage just read over beforehand.

(2) A passage at sight.

(3) Separate sentences set to test special points in pronunciation.

Exercises (a)-(c) test progress in understanding spoken English, exercises under (d) progress in pronunciation. Tests of reading and writing can follow the general lines suggested for the external examination.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PREPARATION OF THE TEACHER

It would be easy, but of little immediate use, to utter ideals about the preparation of the teacher. We should all like his English to be perfect, his acquaintance with English life and literature close and wide, and his skill in teaching of the highest order. In India none of these acquisitions can at present reasonably be expected, if only for lack of funds (though money is not everything); but as there are some factors in the preparation that are both important and practicable and often ignored, it is worth while selecting these for discussion.

#### *The Teacher's Knowledge of English*

One of the obstacles to the efficient teaching of English in Indian schools is the teacher's own deficiencies in English. He is commonly deficient in two respects—

- (1) He does not know English enough, and
- (2) What he does know is of the wrong kind.

Or, to put the case a little more exactly,

(1) He has not sufficient mastery of the English that he habitually uses; and

(2) The English that he uses is not the English of most use to his pupil.

There is a remedy for the first of these defects. At present the teacher of English in a high school is a University graduate, trained as a teacher or untrained, or an undergraduate, or matriculate that has been trained. At any rate, we may, without being thought unreasonable or visionary, assume one of these qualifications and decline to deal with teachers with lower qualifications than these, as they should not exist.

To give the intending teacher a sufficient mastery of English two measures are requisite:—

- (a) He must study it longer.
- (b) He must study it better.



Now the present teacher of English is usually what is called a class-teacher, that is, he takes one or two subjects besides English in his school, as history and geography, or chemistry and physics and, perhaps, physiology or agriculture, or mathematics in two or more branches. In higher classes the subject-teacher is more in favour, in lower classes the class-teacher, so that we may find the teacher of English in a junior class taking also history, geography, and mathematics, though less often, be it noted, a vernacular.

*Its Relation to the Class-teacher or Subject-teacher System*

Now this class-teacher system has no doubt several advantages, and its observance in India, in imitation of established practice in England has passed almost into tradition. But in India it has the special disadvantage, that it compels the prospective teacher of English to give a great deal of time and attention to other subjects during his teaching career, and thus restricts the time for his study of English. Considering how indispensable to the pupil's immediate and future education is the efficient teaching of English in schools, the question arises whether the advantages of the class-teacher over the subject-teacher plan of distributing the teacher's work are not too dearly gained. Indeed, the question is now being asked in England whether there is any advantage in the class-teacher arrangement at all, at least for pupils in the post-elementary stage. The stock arguments are that a teacher in charge of several subjects in the same class gets a better chance than the specialist of knowing each pupil, and is thus in a better position to look after his conduct and his interests, and to see that he proportions his attention evenly amongst his subjects. But opinion in England is losing confidence in this position. The specialist or subject-teacher plan has advantages on its side. The teacher can be much more master of his subject, and of the method of presenting it to pupils of different types and aptitudes, and this mastery and skill are now being increasingly demanded in a period of transition from the old class-teaching to the reformed or new teaching which tries

to do its best for each individual (not excluding the brightest) and to guide each pupil in studying for himself. It is at least arguable that to-day this very reform is equally needed in India. The subject-teacher makes it possible. Meantime the advantages of the class-teacher need not be lost. Where the specialist plan is introduced, special measures of co-ordination between teachers to prevent disproportion or excessive homework accompany the reform, and tutors are appointed from amongst the staff for pupil groups and given special opportunities of familiarizing themselves with each pupil in the group. Besides this the subject-teacher is in a better position than the class-teacher to preserve continuity of study from class to class.

In India, to these reasons for a change of attitude towards the class-teacher system may be added the immense benefit that would come to the English teaching from the more intensive preparation of the prospective teacher for his task and his concentration upon it in his school career, with the accompanying stimulus of his personal responsibility for its success.

### *An Intensive Training*

For what is indispensable to a better equipment of the teacher is an intensive course of preparation. This should comprise—

(a) A study of and training in phonetics, and the method of using phonetic knowledge and skill in teaching languages ;

(b) a thorough familiarity with methods of language teaching, not of English alone but of vernaculars also.

If there is one thing that previous chapters in this book have tried to show, it is that *of the vernacular and of English neither the learning (by the pupil) nor the teaching (by the teacher) can be treated separately without hampering or distorting the pupil's progress in both.*

(c) Much more confident and complete mastery in the teacher of the English that he habitually employs ; and

(d) a change of the teacher's circle of working English from the type of English now customarily

acquired at the University to a type of most service to the ordinary schoolboy and the ordinary adult in his home and professional occupations.

The need and nature of this circle of working English has been dwelt on again and again throughout this book.

For the teacher of English in the school it is not conversance with Milton, Chaucer, Burke, Burns, or even Anthony Hope, or a knowledge of the history of English Literature, nor even the power to write an essay on literary or reflective subjects or on subjects of the University curriculum of the University standard that anything like so important as a working mastery of daily commonplace English idioms, an acquaintance with English books of a kind and standard suitable for boys of school age, a good pronunciation, and some power of reading aloud. This means a course on quite different lines, taught in a different way, from the courses and procedure in vogue for University students. The high school teacher requires a specially designed intensive English curriculum. And for his training, besides the practical study of phonetics just mentioned, is required not only familiarity with the general technique of teaching, but a study of and practice in the special technique of modern language teaching, in association with suitable reading books (intensive and cursory), actually used in schools, but leaving room for independent experiment.

### *University English*

Now all this is the business of training institutions, as far as it is not a customary part of the University degree course in English. The student who takes to teaching after a University degree course in English comes to his task seriously handicapped by his addiction for four years at a University to English of a kind that does actual harm in schools, and his abstention from just that sort of plain language that does equal service at the pupil stage for speaking and writing, and is at least as good a groundwork for his reading as the other. What the University student acquires is English at once bookish and bare. What the teacher of English requires is the English of speech in its simplest and most useful

varieties. The two circles have only a part in common. The examinations of proficiency in English for the two types of student are, of course, proportionately different.

Lastly, though it is not quite on our subject of teacher preparation, when appointments are made in schools, the practice should be encouraged of assigning not the worse but the better linguists to the early years of study.

In learning a good pronunciation, in gathering a useful vocabulary, in acquiring an interest in the language, a good beginning is half the battle. If there are teachers of varying ability on the staff, the place for the best speaker is at the start and the end of the course, of the good reader aloud towards the end and the worse man should have—in a high school—the later middle classes.

## APPENDIX I

### STAMMERING

STAMMERING is common amongst Indian school pupils, especially in reading or speaking a foreign language. Teachers are usually at a loss in treating it, and are apt to leave it to cure itself.

Apparently it is due more often to faulty muscular movements than to defects in the formation of the vocal organ, and can thus usually be cured if treated in time. These faulty movements are generally the expression of physical or nervous weakness aggravated by the fear of ridicule and self-consciousness in the presence of others.

The cure will, therefore, include expedients (a) to remove fear and nervousness, and (b) to correct the muscular movements

(1) The pupil may join in simultaneous reading but should not be forced to read alone with the rest of the class present.

(2) He may read in company with a boy on either side of him. These boys act as pace-makers, and if the stammerer gets along successfully, at a given signal they may desist but resume if he gets into fresh difficulties.

(3) As stammerers seldom stammer when singing, a sing-song or markedly rhythmic speech may be encouraged. 'A steady rhythm rapped out on the desk during speech will go far to cure mild cases, and if the beat can be maintained by the pupil himself so much the better.' <sup>1</sup>

(4) The pupil who stammers chiefly through nervousness in the presence of the class may be encouraged to read aloud to or with a friend in private.

(5) Nose-breathing should be insisted on and exercises be given in steady deep breathing before

reading begins. *The teacher should direct the breathing with his hand.*

(6) There may be special exercises with sounds and consonants which the pupil finds difficult.

Of course the sufferer must never be laughed at or made to feel small ; and the teacher must encourage him to overcome his defect, and watch for the remedy that proves most efficacious.

Obstinate cases require special skilled treatment at home.

## APPENDIX II

SUMMARY of suggestions made in this book for measures of organization and administration to improve the conditions under which English is taught in Indian schools.

### (a) *Regarding the Teacher.*—

(1) The first years of English should be entrusted to the better linguist amongst the teachers of English in a school, to one who has a good command of the simplest vocabulary of common life, and a good pronunciation. The mediocre teacher should have the intermediate stage, if any.

(2) Co-operation between the teachers of English and of subjects taught through the medium of English is indispensable, if errors in English accumulated in studying subjects other than English are not to become habitual. A definite programme of co-operation should be devised and imposed by the Headmaster.

(3) Unless the teacher of English has reached a standard of acquirement in English at least equivalent to that required for a second division in English in a B.A. examination the teacher when under training should specialize in English and methods of teaching English without attempting to prepare himself for the teaching of other subjects—unless it be a vernacular. Consequently the class-teacher system of apportioning the teachers' work in schools should be modified accordingly.

(4) Every teacher of English should be trained in phonetics, that is, in the science of language sounds and in the arts of pronunciation and of imparting efficiently an accurate pronunciation to others.

(5) Every teacher of English should familiarize himself with the common English of daily life required for the use of pupils of the school stage rather than with literary English of the type required for success in degree examinations.

(b) *Miscellaneous.*—

(6) With a view to reducing or removing the harm now done in the teaching of English in high schools by the public examination in English that closes the school career, this examination should be carefully reformed. In effecting its reformation the influence of every proposed type of question upon the teaching in schools should be a first consideration, and economy of time and labour entailed in the examination a second. The making of the test should have much more time and care, in order that the marking may entail less.

(7) Education Departments through their Text-book Committees or otherwise might secure the provision of suitable wall pictures for teaching English, of readers for the early stage of study printed in phonetic script, of careful adaptations and simplifications of books written for English boys for the supplementary and library reading of pupils studying English.



## THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

*THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH: A NEW APPROACH.* By W. S. Tomkinson, with a preface by E. A. Greening Lamborn. 5s. 6d. net.

Contents: Oral Expression; Practice in Speech; The Debate and the More Formal Speech Exercises; Reading; On Verse-making; The Prose Composition Exercise; On Dictation and On Learning by Heart; Appreciation; The Teacher's Private Reading; Bibliography.

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